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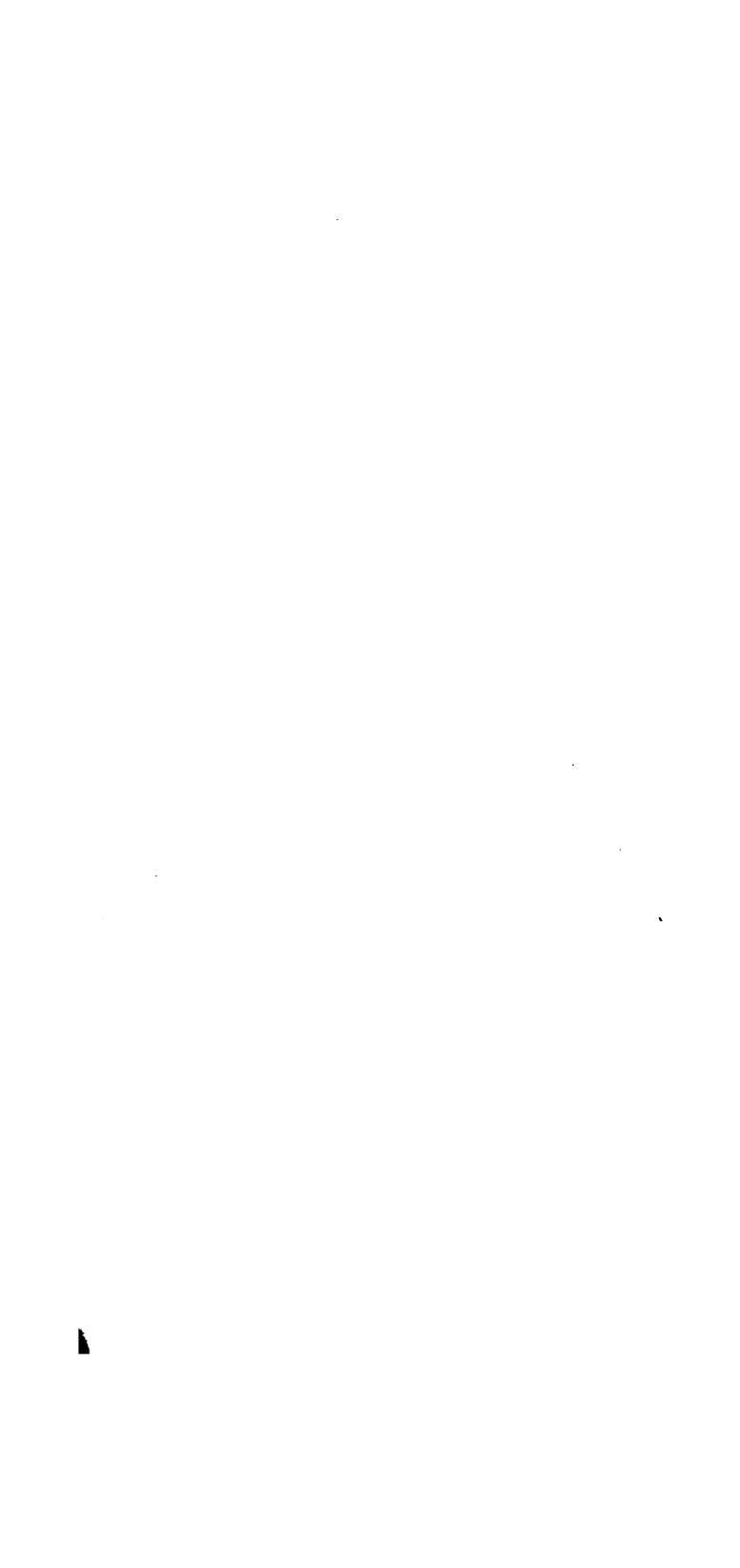
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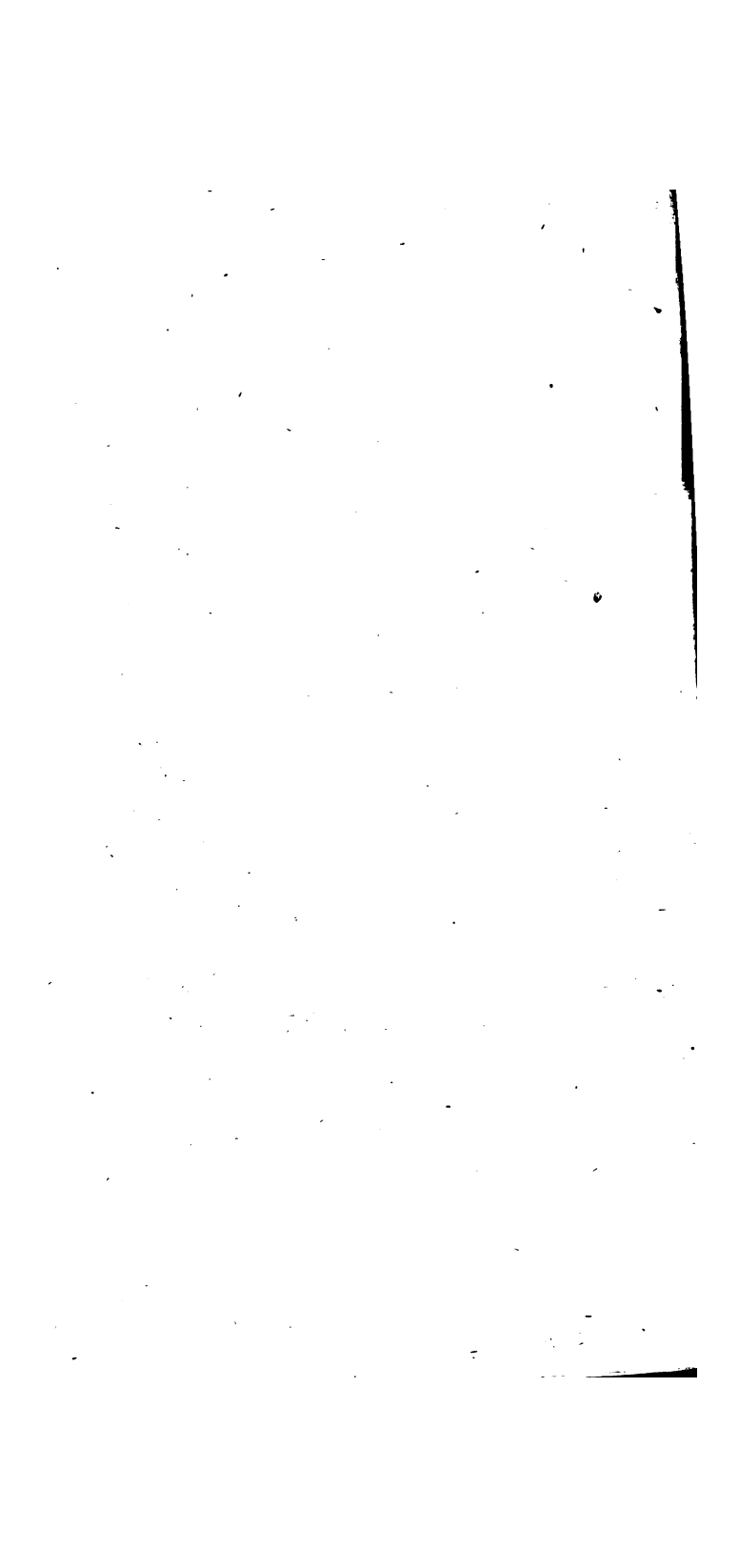
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H E N R Y;

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF ARUNDEL.

Richard Cumberland

VOL. III.

Ficta voluptatis causâ fint proxima veris,
Nec quodcunque volet poscat sibi fabula credi.



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HENRY.



H E N R Y.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

*An humble Apology for Authors in general, with
some modest Hints at their peculiar Usefulness.*

I HOPE the candid reader now and then calls to mind how much more nimbly he travels over these pages than the writer of them did. When our dullness is complained of, it would be but charity in him to reflect how much pains that same dullness has cost us; more, he may be assured, than our brighter intervals, where we sprung nimbly forward with an easy weight, instead of toiling like a carrier's horse, whose slow and heavy pace argues the load he draws, and the labour he endures: alas! for us poor Novelists, if there was no mercy for dull authors, and our countrymen, like the barbarous Libethrians of old, should take it into their minds to banish music

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and

and the muses out of the land, and murder every Orpheus that did not fiddle to their taste. They should consider, that the man, who makes a book, makes a very pretty piece of furniture; and if they will but consign us to a quiet station on a shelf, and give us wherewithal to cover us in a decent trim, the worst amongst us will serve to fill up the file, and stop a gap in the ranks.

'Tis hard indeed to toil, as we sometimes do, to our own loss and disappointment; to sweat in the field of fame, merely to reap a harvest of chaff, and pile up reams of paper for the worm to dine upon. It is a cruel thing to rack our brains for nothing, run our jaded fancies to a stand-still, and then lie down at the conclusion of our race, a carcase for the critics. And what is our crime all the while? A mere mistake between our readers and ourselves, occasioned by a small miscalculation of our capacities and their candour; all which would be avoided, if happily for us they had not the wit to find out our blunders, or, happily for them, had all that good nature for us that we generously exercise towards ourselves. If once they could bring their tempers to this charming complacency, they might depend
upon

upon having books in plenty ; authors would multiply like polypusses, and the press would be the happiest mother in the kingdom.

How many worthy gentlemen are there in this blessed island of our's, who have so much time upon their hands, that they do not know what to do with it? I am aware how large and respectable a portion of this enlightened nation center their delights in the chace, and draw an elegant resource from the sagacity of the hound and the vigour of the horse ; but they cannot always be on the saddle ; the elements they cannot command ; and frost and snow will lock them up within their castle walls : there it is possible that solitude may surprise them, and dismiss them for a time to the solace of their own lucubrations : now, with all possible respect for these resources, I should think it may sometimes be worth their while to make experiment of other people's lucubrations, when they have worn out their own, for those must be but sorry thoughts, which are not better than not thinking at all ; and the least they can gain by an author is a nap.

The ingenuity of man has invented a thousand contrivances for innocently disposing of

idle time ; let us, therefore, who write books, have only the idlers on our side, in gratitude for the amusement we give them, and let the rest of the world be as splenetic as they will, we may set their spleen at naught ; the majority will be with us.

If a querulous infant is stilled by a rattle, the maker of the rattle has saved somebody's ears from pain and persecution ; grant, therefore, that a novel is nothing better than a toy for children of a larger growth and more unruly age, society has some cause to thank the writer of it ; it may have put an aching head to rest ; it may have cheered the debtor in his prison, or the country squire in a hard frost. Traders will cry up the commodity they deal in, therefore I do not greatly insist on the praises which some that write books have bestowed on book-writing, but I do observe, that great respect is paid to an author by those who cannot read him, wherefore I conclude, those who can read, and do not praise him, are only silent because they want words to express their admiration and gratitude ; whilst those sanguine flatterers, who, in the excess of their respect for our persons, cry down our performances, give evident proof how much
higher

higher they had pitched their expectations of what our talents would produce, than our productions could make good ; but though in their zeal for our reputations, they tell us how ill we write, they seldom neglect at the same time to shew us how we might have written still worse.

Some over-wise people have pretended to discover, that this altercation between author and critic is nothing more than a mere plot and contrivance to play into each others hands, like Mountebank and Zany ; but this is over-acted sagacity, and an affectation of finding more mysteries in the art of authorship, than really belong to it ; for my part, I believe it is a business of a more simple nature than most which can be taken up, and that authors in general require nothing more than pen, ink, and paper to set up with. In ancient times, the trade was in few hands, and the work seems then to have been composed with much pains and forethought ; materials were collected with great care, and put together with consummate accuracy and attention ; every part was fitted to its place, polished to the height, and finished to perfection ; there were inspectors on the part of the public, men

of sound judgment, and fully competent to the office, who brought the work to a standard of rule and measure, and insisted upon it, that every whole should have *a beginning, a middle, and an end*. Under these strict regulations the ancients wrote ; but now that practice has made us perfect, and the trade is got into so many hands, these regulations are done away, and so far from requiring of us a *beginning, middle, and end*, it is enough if we can shew a head and a tail ; and it is not always that even these can be made out with any tolerable precision. As our authors write with less labour, our critics review with less care, and for every one fault that they mark in our productions, there probably might be found one hundred that they overlook. It is an idle notion, however, to suppose that therefore they are in league and concert with the authors they revise ; for where could that poor fraternity find a fund to compensate them for suffering a vocation once so reputable to fall into such utter disgrace under their management, as to be no longer the employ of a gentleman ? As for our readers, on whom we never fail to bestow the terms of candid, gentle, courteous, and others of the like soothing cast, they cer-
tainly

tainly deserve all the fair words we can give them, for it is not to be denied, but that we make occasionally very great demands upon their candour, gentleness, and courtesy, exercising them frequently and fully with such trials as require those several endowments in no small proportion. The farther I advance therefore in this work, the civiler I will be; and to those readers who shall follow me into this third volume, I may with justice apply the epithets of patient, persevering, faithful, and so on, with a *crescendo* in my strain, till the piece is concluded.

But are there not also fastidious, angry, querulential readers? readers with full stomachs, who complain of being surfeited and overloaded with the story-telling trash of our circulating libraries? It cannot be altogether denied, but still they are readers: if the load is so heavy upon them as they pretend it is, I will put them in the way of getting rid of it, by reviving the law of the ancient Ciceræans, who obliged their artists to hawk about their several wares, carrying them on their backs, till they found purchasers to ease them of the burthen. Was this law put in force against authors, few of us, I doubt, would be

found able to stand under the weight of our own unpurchased works.

But whilst the public is contented with things as they are, where is the wonder if the reform is never made by us till they begin it in themselves ? Let their taste lead the fashion, and our productions must accord to it. Whilst the Cookeries of Hannah Glas outcirculate the Commentaries of Blackstone, authors will be found, who prefer the compilation of receipts to that of records, as the easier and more profitable task of the two. If puerilities are pleasing, men will write *ut pueris placeant*.

When Demosthenes was engaged in the defence of a certain citizen of Athens, who was brought to trial upon a charge of a capital nature, neither the importance of the cause, nor the eloquence of the pleader, could fix the attention of the judges who were sitting on the trial : the orator, observing their levity, on a sudden stopt short in the midst of his harangue, and addressing himself to the court, —“ Listen to me,” he cried, “ ye venerable judges, for a few moments, and I will tell you a merry tale :—A certain young man, having occasion to take a journey from this city
of

of our's to Megara, hir'd an afs for the job; but being extremely incommoded on the way by a scorching sun, which smote him with intolerable heat at noon, he dismounted from his beast, and made free to take post under the shade of his carcase: upon this the afs-owner, who accompanied him, remonstrated with great vehemence, contending that his afs was let for the journey simply and precisely, and that the service now required of him was extra-conditional and illegal: the traveller with equal vehemence maintain'd, that he was warranted in the use he made of him, and that having hir'd the afs in substance, he was intitled to the benefit of his shadow into the bargain: the question was open to controversy, and the parties went to trial on the case."— Here Demosthenes ceased, and taking up his brief, prepared to leave the court: the judges seeing this, called out to him to return and go on with his pleading.—“ For shame, ye men of Athens,” cried the indignant orator, “ ye can lend your ears to the story of an afs, but will not bestow your attention upon a trial, that involves the life or death of a fellow-citizen.”

CHAPTER II.

Our Hero undergoes a strict Examination by a certain Judge called Conscience.

AS soon as our hero had brought Blachford to consent to his disinterested proposal, he took immediate measures for securing the success of it. To bring the infant and its mother to an interview with the dying penitent was his first object. The woman, who had the child at nurse, did not live above two miles off, so that a messenger would soon fetch her over: Susan, indeed, was at a greater distance, but the day yet served for bringing her from Manstock; and Henry immediately sat down and wrote the following note:

“ Dear Susan,

“ A business, in which you are greatly interested, requires your presence in this place;
“ Mr. Blachford’s life is so precarious, that not
“ an hour is to be lost: I recommend it to
“ you therefore to state this to your amiable
“ lady, and, with her permission, come away
“ directly

“directly in the chaise, that will attend for
“that purpose.

“Your’s sincerely,

“HENRY.”

Whilst Henry was writing this note, young Tom Weevil, who had got notice of his arrival, opportunely called upon him, and no sooner understood that he wanted a messenger to Manstock house, than he zealously tendered his services for that errand, and by Henry was instructed to ride to the next market-town, which luckily was in the road, and there put himself into a post chaise for the purpose of conveying Susan in the most speedy and commodious manner.

This business being thus adjusted, and another messenger dispatched for the nurse and child, our hero returned to the cottage, and throwing himself into Ezekiel’s wicker chair, enjoyed for some minutes, in silent reflection, that heart-felt satisfaction, that only can result from self-approving conscience. As he meditated on the sacrifice he was now about to make, he felt a momentary gleam of virtuous exultation, which tempted him to cry out—“O Matcliffe! dear departed friend! thou wou’d’st

have prais'd me for this deed, and if thy fainted spirit holds communication with me still, I know thou wilt regard it as a pledge of my obedience to thy fatherly instructions. But what is this I boast of? Nothing, compar'd to the severer trial that awaits me, and demands an effort strong indeed, a sacrifice from which my heart shrinks back with terror and dismay. Oh! be my guardian still; let thy protecting spirit strengthen my feeble nature, and inspire me with the resolution to fulfil the fatal promise I have made, and pay the forfeit of my folly.—Married to Fanny Claypole!—All hopes of happiness for ever blasted to repair her reputation wantonly expos'd.—Hard terms indeed, and heavy penalty I have exacted from myself in an unguarded moment; but the word is pass'd, and I must honourably make it good: and fit I shou'd, if that is the atonement she requires; for what but chance prevented the completion of my guilt? The meditation therefore in my instance is the act itself, and I am virtually her debtor to no less amount than for the loss of all that can be valuable to a modest woman. I know the plea that some wou'd make; her forwardness, her fondness, her allurements: if
this

this were good in any case, it wou'd be so in mine; but the excuse is mean and villainous; that and that only can be my acquittal, which acquits me to myself; this cannot serve the turn; my conscience never will be quieted by evasions. 'Tis true the act was frustrated; what then? I was not quite so abandon'd as to sin in presence of a warning angel: and can I ever lose the memory of that rebuke, which the offended purity of that angel justly bestowed? Oh, Isabella! how that frown made my heart sink within me! Never again shall I have confidence to look upon that lovely face, which till that moment ever greeted me with smiles. No more shall that sweet voice salute my ears like music, as it was wont to do in the still hour of evening, when we walk'd together: those happy hours are never to return again."

Zachary Cawdle now made his appearance, having returned from his visit to Lady Crowbery—"I bring you news," said he, "of our excellent lady, that will please you; her disorder seems abated, and I flatter myself she will gain strength and spirits to carry her through her journey both by land and sea: she sets out to-morrow in the forenoon for Manstock-

stock-house, where she will repose herself for that night. I have her express commands to desire you will not fail to meet her there."—"I know not how that can be," said Henry. "She is very anxious it shou'd be, I can assure you," rejoined the Doctor, "and I believe she has very interesting matters to confer with you upon, for she said she must positively see you, as she cou'd not express all she had to say by letter; neither indeed do I hold it fit she shou'd exhaust herself in writing for any length of time. If it is your business with Mr. Blachford that stands in the way, I hope that may be dismissed before it will be necessary for you to set out to-morrow from this place."

Henry asked if her ladyship had said any thing on that subject. "Not much," Zachary replied; "she had noticed it but slightly, seeming to intimate a doubt whether it was matter of congratulation or not, which I confess," he added, "rather puzzled me to account for, as her ladyship cannot fail to know that our neighbour will, in the vulgar phrase, die fat; and let your expectations be what they may, surely a good fortune in hand is a good thing at all events."—"Most people are of that opinion," said Henry, "but her ladyship, perhaps,

haps, may think otherwise.”—“ Whatever she thinks,” replied Zachary, “ I dare say she will keep it to herself, till she meets you, and converses with you at Manstock.”

To this our hero made no further answer, but turned the discourse, by enquiring after Mrs. Cawdle.—“ Her health,” said the Doctor, “ is no better, her temper much worse, and her enthusiasm more extravagant than ever. Blachford’s situation seems to trouble her much; she has liv’d with him as a sinner, and wou’d now fain part from him like a saint; but he has refus’d all her tenders, and has given his conscience into Ezekiel’s keeping: this mortifies her in a double sense, for she not only meant to send him out of the world in the true faith, but had an eye also to the good things he has to leave behind him, of which she had no objection to come in for a share; but, thanks to the fates! all that is otherwise dispos’d of. As to the state of her constitution, that is in a rapid decline from bad to worse, being only held together like a sinking vessel by the very elements that sap and undermine it. When I take my leave of her, as I shall do to-morrow, great chance if our’s is not an everlasting farewell.”

This

This said, Zachary took his leave, having many preparations to make for his approaching departure.

Henry was not sorry to be left to his reflections, for his mind was greatly embarrassed by the message he had received from Lady Crowbery. To present himself once more at Manstock-house was painful in the extreme; to disobey the commands of a mother on so interesting a summons was an alternative not to be thought of: how to avoid the one without transgressing the other was a point of difficulty that now engrossed his thoughts; and as for Zachary's concluding account of Jemima's melancholy condition, from that it is more than probable he had carried off very little, if any, information.

The great evil of all, that sunk deepest into his mind, was his engagement to Miss Claypole, a lady very little to his taste, and the consequent loss of all hope that had respect to Isabella, a lady, whom at his heart he most ardently admired and loved. The disgrace he had incurred with himself, as well as with her, in that fatal moment of his weakness, was a cutting recollection; till then he had stood high in the good opinion of that excellent
young

young lady; every hour that he passed in Manstock-house, whilst she was present, made this more and more manifest; even his natural humility of character could not overlook it; he saw the advances he made in her good graces, and only trembled for her danger lest they were too rapid; every look, every action that that was directed towards him had an expression not to be mistaken; Susan's reports confirmed the interest that he had established in the approving heart of her lovely mistress, and the satisfaction which she took in her evening walks with him, with the innocent contrivances she had to prolong and to repeat them, were flattering indications of an attachment forming fast, if not already formed; the greater therefore was his fall from hopes so elevated; and what could he now expect from purity like her's, but absolute dismissal and contempt?

As for the measures he was now to take towards his new discovered mother, they seemed to offer nothing to his view but a maze of difficulties. To lay open to her his embarrassments, and make a full confession of his faults and misfortunes, was a task his resolution was not equal to, neither did it seem a fit subject

to discourse with her upon in her present state of health and spirits. But how to keep it from her was the question; how to stop so many channels through which the disgraceful story might find its way to her, was a point not easily to be determined; how far Miss Manstock might have spread her discovery was matter of uncertainty; her delicacy would hardly be brought to continue the same intimacy with Fanny Claypole as before, and every thing was to be dreaded from that young lady's flippant stile of talking, who would naturally make public the engagement she had entered into with him as an apology essential to her own defence; these, and many other apprehensions, that pressed upon his thoughts, were rendered doubly alarming, when he took into his consideration the character of Mr. Claypole; from him he had every thing to expect that a jealous, deep-projecting spirit could devise; he saw to what extent his influence over Sir Roger Manstock might be carried; and he had no cause to doubt him well disposed to put it to the stretch for any object that he had at heart: beset on all sides with such difficulties, and in a streight from which he spied no honourable

nourable escape, it is not to be wondered at if his thoughts wavered without any fixt resolve, embarrassed and distressed.

One small alleviation Fortune granted him by the occupation of Ezekiel at this time with his penitent at next door; he was not present to interpose and aggravate with fruitless declamations against the incontinence of Susan May, or the enormous crime of duelling, which Henry's affair with Captain Crowbery was sure to draw upon him; when behold the whole matter brought to issue at once by the arrival of Mr. Claypole himself now at the door of the cottage, and at this very moment in the act of dismounting from his palfrey.

CHAPTER III.

Our Hero undergoes a second Examination by a certain Judge, with whom Conscience has no Concern.

THOUGH the reverend gentleman, who now visited our hero in his humble cottage, was left by us, when last we attended upon him, in the mind to defer this visit to the next morning,

morning, yet second thoughts had made him change that resolve, upon the prudent recollection of the many interventions a procrastinated measure is exposed to, especially when it hangs upon the single security of a verbal promise, extorted as it were by surprize, and not deliberately given upon judgment and inclination. He therefore thought it best to steal a march upon disappointment, and without communicating his intentions to his niece, making only a slight apology to Sir Roger, mounted his horse, and proceeded upon a round trot to the village of Crowbery, pondering by the way upon the measures he was to take, and the language he was to hold, for securing the important purposes of his secret expedition.

There was an air of studied composure in his first approaches, with a degree of obsequious ceremony, that did not escape the penetrating observation of our hero Henry, who immediately assimilated his stile of address to that of his visitor, and kept himself on the reserve. After the usual salutations had passed and repassed between them, Claypole began to open his commission in the following manner:

“ I wait upon you, Sir, on the behalf of
an

an orphan niece, for whose happiness and reputation I have all that tender interest, which, as a father, I cou'd entertain for an only child. Miss Claypole, give me leave to say, is a young lady, on whose character not the slightest imputation hitherto has been known to rest; judge therefore with what exquisite sensibility she feels the consequences of last night's event, and with what poignant inquietude she is now waiting the confirmation of that promise, which alone can heal those feelings, and relieve her anxious mind from its suspense: she is by nature endow'd with the warmest affections; those affections you have gain'd; your fine person, engaging attentions, and amiable character have made a conquest of her heart, and love, which in colder bosoms ripens by degrees, in her's sprung up at once to full maturity, and gave you unequivocal proofs how much you was beloved and trusted: I will not give the name of prudence to a passion of this cast; I must as a divine and moralist condemn excess in every shape; even our most virtuous propensities must have bounds set to their exertions; and errors, tho' arising from motives the most generous, merit some reproof; yet I will confess to you, that if in any instance I cou'd find

find excuse for an unbounded confidence, it wou'd be in your's, relying, as I do, with so much justice, on your honour and integrity of principle; but, Sir, the virgin fame of an untainted character is delicate in the extreme; it is a blossom shrinking at the blast, withering and drooping with the touch. Those fond unguarded moments, which the sensualist calls *golden opportunities*, the man of honour shou'd account as sacred, and hold the heart, which love commits into his hands, as an inviolable trust. Now it has so happened, whether casually or providentially we will not enquire, that those very proofs of confidence and affection, which must have endeared her to you, have exposed her to reproach and shame, and obliged her to fly from the society she was in to my solitary parsonage, where she is now hiding herself in retirement and exclusion from all visitors but yourself, anxiously awaiting the completion of your promise to restore her to her reputation, her happiness, and friends. It is not therefore that I harbour any doubt of your good faith; it is not that I can suppose you lost to honour, or insensible to the beauty, fortune and good qualities of my niece, that I now require a confirmation of your word of honour

honour from your own lips, but simply that I may be authoriz'd not only to put her inquietude to rest, but also to assure Sir Roger Manstock, whose delicacy suffers great alarm by what has pass'd beneath his roof, that there is no call for his remonstrances, nor any insult meditated to a lady under his protection, and for whose redress he holds himself responsible."

Here Claypole ceased, and Henry replied as follows:—"A very few words, Sir, will suffice to answer all you have been pleas'd to say. I perfectly well remember what I have promis'd to Miss Claypole; and I want neither menaces nor persuasions to induce me to perform it."

"Give me leave then," cried Claypole, interposing, "to felicitate you on the possession of a lady, whom I have the vanity to say, the best gentleman in the kingdom might be proud to call his wife. I boast not of her fortune, Sir, that is but a secondary consideration where so many admirable qualities conspire to make the union happy; and fortune, perhaps, tho' with many the first object, may have lost much of its weight, if any it ever had, in your esteem, since this great accession has so luckily devolv'd upon you."

"Truly,

"Truly, Sir," said Henry in reply, "Miss Claypole's fortune never weigh'd with me; and as for this extraordinary bequest of Mr. Blachford's, which was totally unthought of, 'tis evident from the recency of the event, that it cou'd never be in contemplation of that lady at the moment of our engagement. It was, as you observe, a lucky cast of chance, and therefore, I conceive, whether I may or may not be benefited by it, it does not regularly come into question between you and me."

"Not as a principal, perhaps, but collaterally it does; it gives you means which you was unprovided with before, and therefore, as a friend soon to be connected with you in a near degree, you cannot wonder if I feel a lively interest in an event so calculated to promote your happiness."

"Right, Sir," resumed Henry; "it will promote my happiness, as all things must that please me on reflection, and enable me to say within myself, I have fulfilled the golden rule of doing as I wou'd be done by."

"That is indeed," said Claypole, gravely, "the great rule of Christian equity; but I must own I do not at this time exactly see your application of it, for I shou'd suppose

pose the point of conscience rather lies with Blachford than with you."

"I rather think it lies with both; an act of conscience which we share between us."

"I comprehend you now less than I did before," quoth the baffled interrogator; "will you be pleas'd to explain to me?"

"In one single word; Mr. Blachford has a son."

Claypole started, threw himself back in his chair, and striking his hands together, after the fashion of his patron Sir Roger, exclaimed—"Well, Sir, a son! what then? some bastard we'll suppose."

"And if we do suppose it such, what then?" said Henry, retorting his words rather acrimoniously, and pretty nearly in the same key and cadence.

Claypole paused; he recollected probably the point his question bore *ad hominem*, and coolly answered, that the law did not acknowledge persons of that description.

"But you and I are neither of us lawyers," replied our hero, softening his manner: "You are a divine, a moralist profess, and as for me, poor altho' I am, and probably in the very same predicament with this son of nature, yet

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I wou'd fain aspire to copy that great rule of Christian equity approv'd by you, and shew that I am not wanting in a sense of honour towards others, no less than towards Miss Claypole."

"Still I am puzzled," rejoined Claypole, "to comprehend your meaning: you tell me Blachford has a son. You have not told me that he means to leave him his estate."

"Permit me first to ask what you wou'd counsel him to do, had you his conscience in your care."

"That is a question for myself, not him: I understood that you was made his heir by will."

"And so I am," said Henry; "but my will must be consenting to the execution of the deed."

"And what shou'd hinder it? 'Tis an atonement for a murderous attempt: he bestows upon you his fortune; he sought to take away your life."

"He gave life to this innocent."

"Some beggar's brat, perhaps: Blachford was very low in his amours: a small provision may suffice for such an one."

"But I," said Henry, "am no son of Blachford's;

Blachford's; I covet not his gold: I can forgive my enemy without a bribe, but I cannot strip the child of its inheritance to purchase the world's wealth; I cannot do it; and I think you do not wish to see me rich on such conditions."

To this the reverend visitor replied, "I shou'd have thought, young gentleman, that you had felt the smart of poverty sufficiently to warn you from encountering it afresh: an unconnected being in the world may be romantic at his own expence, but you are not this being; you have claims upon you nearer, I shou'd suppose, and dearer to you, than this brat of Blachford, which possibly some hussy fathers on him falsely; and I am unwilling to believe you seriously intend to throw good fortune from you, when you so happily might share it with a well-beloved wife."

"Had that lady ever had a share in it," replied Henry, "or had that fortune ever been but hinted at as a contingency within the scope of speculation, I shou'd have something to account for; but you must be conscious how very recently this thing has dropt upon me; and that it is an unlookt for opportunity of being just at my own cost; no other person

has a part in what I sacrifice; and what is that man's honesty, which does not reach beyond his interest? If we do well, and suffer for it, that service is acceptable. This being a christian principle, I cannot doubt but it is your's."

At these words the reverend personage assumed a look of more than ordinary gravity, in which 'tis possible some mixture of wrath might be discernible, and thus made answer—"It is not now a question what my principles may be, but what your's are, and I suspect that, under a romantic idea of justice to others, you forget the justice due to yourself and those connected with you. If you can lavish Blachford's whole estate away at a stroke, what security have I that you wou'd not serve Miss Claypole's in the like manner, was it in your power? Such principles as these are dangerous to the peace and prosperity of families, and you cannot wonder if, in point of prudence, I am somewhat stagger'd: he that enriches beggars may make rich folks poor. What will my Lady Crowbery say to this proceeding?"

"I have not ask'd her."

"But it will much import you so to do. This fortune wou'd have made you independent:

dent: you have now nothing to look to but her favour; and how is it certain, when this business shall be known, she may not think fit to withdraw it? 'Tis right at least that her intentions shou'd be understood before we venture further. You have also been engag'd in a duel with a relation of Lord Crowbery's. These are altogether such proceedings as may cause a change of sentiment in your patroness; and what then becomes of my poor niece? I must be certified from that noble personage herself in what light she regards this most extraordinary measure."

To this Henry replied—"If you act solely for yourself in this affair, Mr. Claypole, you will act solely from your own judgment; if for your niece, you will probably consult her wishes before you take a step so totally subversive of the whole transaction, as your reference to Lady Crowbery wou'd be."

"I don't understand you, Sir; did you propose to marry without her consent?"

"I certainly had not pledg'd her consent in my promise, and did not therefore engage more than myself to the performance of it. If Miss Claypole accepts that promise, my

honour is attach'd to it, and I hold it sacred: if it is referr'd to Lady Crowbery, my responsibility is taken off, and I shall act by her decision. I hold it as a point of honour to Miss Claypole, thus to state it to you; the alternative is before you."

Mr. Claypole paused for reflection, and then demanded, "How wou'd you advise us to proceed, when it appears that you have nothing to depend upon but the eventual bounty and protection of the Lady Crowbery? But there is yet another thing," added he, "to be explain'd: you inform'd my friend Sir Roger Manstock by a letter which I saw, that you was going out to sea with Captain Cary; I trust you have no thoughts of that."

"Pardon me, Sir; such is my full intention."

"Is that consistent," cried Claypole, "with your promise to my niece?"

"Perfectly so; she will have no cause to complain of it."

"But will Sir Roger Manstock, think you, not oppose his nephew's taking you on board his ship, under such circumstances?"

"I shou'd much fear he will," replied Henry,

Henry, "if you exert your influence to dispose him so to do; in that case I must take some other means."

"Then you are resolv'd at all events to go."

"I am."

"And what to do, permit me to inquire?"

"I hope," said Henry, "you will not press me on that question, seeing we do not treat entirely upon confidence; had we so done, I shou'd hold nothing back. The affair is now entirely with Miss Claypole; in her hands I deposit my honour and my destiny; if she accepts them unconditionally as they were pledg'd, she has then a right to be inform'd of my intentions; if not, the secret dwells with me."

Claypole foresaw that here the conference must end. "That secret," he replied, "may easily be guess'd at."—Then added in conclusion—"I shall make true report of what you tell me to my niece."

CHAPTER IV.

The Decree of the Judge without Conscience reversed.

MR. Claypole had risen from his seat was upon the point of departing, Ezekiel bolted into the room with untamed alacrity, and running up to our hero, threw his arms about his neck : curious or some deeper motive, fixed the reverent visitor to the spot, and the animated enthusiast who probably did not know there was a person present, proceeded to cry out in ecstatic tone—"Henry ! my son ! my child ! glorious generous boy ! may Heaven fling down its blessings on your head ! Come to my heart, for it runs over with affection for you. No, no, I cannot part from you ; I never will work for you, pray for you, nay, bless you, Lord, I will fight for you."—Having, he uttered these last words, quitted his brace, to put himself in a martial attitude correspondent with the sentiment, he cast his eyes upon the person of the looker-on—

der favour, reverend Sir," he said, " I protest I did not advert to your person being present : Mr. Claypole, or I am mistaken."

" The same," cried Claypole, " at your service."

" Not so, worthy Sir," rejoined Ezekiel, " you serve no human master ; and I hail the happy chance that brings you hither to partake of that delight, that christian joy and exultation, which your heart must feel, as preacher of the word of truth and charity, to see this youth, a stripling in the race that is set before us, outstep all competitors, and seize the glorious goal of victory over Mammon, and all his sordid, lucre-loving, filthy worshippers, at an age green in experience, grey, thank Heaven, in virtue, charity and every christian grace ! Yes, reverend Sir, you must surely rejoice and be glad, inasmuch as our friend Henry now appertaineth to your flock ; and report speaks loudly of you as of a faithful pastor in Christ, and I your poor fellow servant and follower at due distance, venerate you therefore. How then must your pious bosom glow to see that this our friend has sacrific'd a noble fortune to his love of justice, rejected treasures pour'd into his lap ; treasures

that might have tempted hermits from their cells, to save the sinner's soul, and clear his conscience for the great account. ' There is ' that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing ; ' there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath ' great riches,' saith the wise man. Behold ! this good deed hath our young man done ; and verily, he shall have great riches in the true sense of the proverb : he hath not taken away the inheritance of the poor destitute ; he hath not robb'd the children's children of their bread, therefore he shall have an inheritance amongst the children of light. I have this instant left the couch of the dying man ; I pronounce him a true penitent ; the thorns, that lurk'd within his pillow, thy hand, my Henry, hath drawn ; his death will be easy ; his spirit will expire in blessings ; his child is now his heir ; the will is clos'd, and he longs to clasp him in his arms : the poor deluded wench, whom his base arts seduc'd, the widow's only child, will now be comforted, and when I've set before her eyes the loathsomeness of sin in proper colours, I have good hope she'll tread the paths of purity hereafter ; at least she shall not want for exhortations on my part ; the daughter of our friendly widow May shall

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not

not be lost for lack of spiritual assistance and advice."

"How's this?" exclaimed Claypole, turning himself towards Henry; "Is Susan May the mother of a son by Blachford? and has the daughter of my friend Sir Roger Manstock been harbouring a strumpet in her service?"

"A strumpet do you call her?" cried Ezekiel. "Reverend Sir, I pray you be advis'd more truly; I do pronounce Susan May to be no strumpet, albeit the mother of this babe; for virtue undermin'd by artifice, or violated by force, is virtue not the less, and charity will give it its true name, with pity and compassion super-added. Your Master, reverend Sir, and mine, condemn'd not her that was taken even in adultery itself; shall we, forgetting his divine benevolence, condemn this damsel, sacrific'd by treachery, divested of reason by the operation of seducing and intoxicating potions, and then thrown insensible and unresisting on the impure couch of the defiler? Forbid it, charity! that you, or I, or any one of christian training, thou'd call that guiltless sufferer a strumpet."

Claypole had heard enough; confounded, vext, indignant; he now started from his seat,

and snatching up his hat, whispered a few words to Henry ; and then darting an angry look at honest Daw, hastily departed.

CHAPTER V.

Our Hero is admitted to an unexpected Conference.

WHILST this was passing in the cottage, Captain Crowbery, after his rencontre with Henry, had returned to the castle, and in a conversation with his cousin the Viscount had done justice to the spirited behaviour of his antagonist, relating the grounds of their quarrel, the words that had passed at their meeting, and all the particulars consequential of it. Now it so happened, that the peer was conscious of being as deep in the plot of the press-gang as his kinsman, but he was not conscious of the same courage to face the resentment of our hero : the story, therefore, caused certain perturbations in his Lordship's mind not altogether agreeable, and he became extremely anxious to be assured that
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the affair was made up so completely, that no after-reckonings could be started, which he himself might be called upon to account for. Nothing humbles some people's pride so much as fear; the pride of Lord Crowbery hardly stooped to any other corrector. On the present occasion, it was thoroughly brought down by more fears than one, for the Captain had brought the news of Henry's being heir to Blachford, which not only cut up his Lordship's interested expectations from that quarter, but brought to his recollection certain papers and correspondences in the possession of the said testator, which would naturally fall into the hands of his executor, and disclose matters very inconvenient to his Lordship to have revealed. How to get these out of Henry's reach was now the question; he had called frequently at the sick man's door for that purpose, but had never been admitted; and to these documents, if they were yet in existence, not only his reputation, but what was dearer to him still, his personal safety, was committed.

It was now that he regretted his former haughty treatment of our hero; he felt himself the dupe of Blachford, and perceived that he had practised upon his jealousy with no
other

other view but to serve his own revengeful purposes, and engage him as a party in his plots against an innocent man. Nay, it is to be presumed, he was not quite proof against the many instances of Henry's honourable conduct; and the impression Captain Crowbery had now received of our hero's behaviour was such, as had made a total change in his sentiments, and that gentleman was now become as zealous an advocate and admirer, as before he was an enemy and a persecutor of Henry. Lord Crowbery, who had motives not quite so honourable, but not less cogent, for making his peace with our hero, lent a willing ear to the commendations that his cousin bestowed upon him, and declared himself so fully convinced that he had been betrayed by Blachford into groundless jealousies and suspicions, that he proposed inviting him to his house, and indulging him with a visit to his benefactress upon the eve of her departure, as a token of his entire reconciliation, and to do away, by this mark of his confidence, all those reports that had been circulated against the reputation of his Lady.

This proposal being heartily seconded by the Captain, Lord Crowbery immediately repaired

paired to the chamber of his Lady, and approaching her with a mild and gracious look, he began by assuring her that he had entirely and for ever dismissed every relic of unkindness and suspicion from his mind; that he was sensible he had been led into error, and alarmed without reason as to her partiality for Henry; that he saw it now not only in the most innocent but most amiable light, and he wished her to persist in the protection of one so well deserving. Lest she should doubt the sincerity of his conversion to an opinion so directly opposite to what he had lately held, he repeated, in short, the substance of the conversation he had just had with his kinsman, and concluded by saying, that as he was persuaded she must wish to see Henry, and to take leave of him before her departure, he proposed, with her consent, to send for him to his house, where she herself should be a witness of the reception he would give him.

Lady Crowbery heard this proposal with a sensation of pleasure not entirely clear from suspicion of its sincerity, yet as she could readily comprehend some reasons that her Lord might have for altering his tone at least, if not his temper, she was not backward to embrace

it with as good a grace as she was capable of assuming. Few favours could be less expected than that of her being permitted to visit Manstock house; this was an indulgence far beyond all hope or conjecture, yet, as she owed the first to the influence of Mr. L——, she might also be indebted to him, jointly with Captain Crowbery, for this further instance of a revolution, either real or affected, in the conduct and opinions of her Lord: and now the Captain with much alacrity undertook to be the bearer of a very civil invitation to our hero on the part of the Viscount, requesting him forthwith to repair to the Castle, where Lady Crowbery was expecting his arrival.

He obeyed the summons, and being prepared for a kind reception by the Captain, who accompanied him from the cottage, he was ushered without delay to the chamber of his mother, where my Lord was waiting, and with as much address as he was master of, welcomed him to his house, saying, that he hoped all former misunderstandings would be forgotten, and that they might be good friends and neighbours in all future time. To this Henry made a proper reply in the same stile of civility, and approached towards Lady Crowbery,

Crowbery, to pay her his respects silently and cautiously, with a tender look of pity and attention. Her languid but still lovely countenance cut him to the heart; the change her frame and features had undergone since last he saw her was too visible. Turning from a spectacle so affecting, he said,—“ It is very kind in you, my Lord, to allow me to pay this melancholy duty to my benefactress; 'tis generous to have this consideration for one, who, with all the purest sentiments of gratitude to the only friend he has in life, is now at length permitted to approach her: I humbly thank you for this great indulgence.”

His voice could execute no more—not a word was attempted by the mother.—“ I'll leave you to yourselves,” said Lord Crowbery, “ and give orders that you shall not be disturbed; your time and privacy shall be your own.”

The door was shut; his step was heard upon the stairs; nature was freed from all restraint; Henry dropt on his knee, and bathed his mother's hand with tears.—“ My son, my son!” was all that she could utter. To attempt the recapitulation of this tender dialogue would be in vain, for words can ill de-
scribe

scribe a scene like this; and he must be an actor rather than author, that can give life to representatives of son and mother in such touching situations. The matter, not the manner, lies within my powers. Henry imparted to her his plan of meeting her at Lisbon, by the favour of Captain Cary, now upon the point of sailing.—“Did she approve of his so doing?”—She most highly approved of it, and warmly recommended it, for reasons interesting to him, no less than to herself: she had received a verbal intimation, through a confidential channel, from his father, Mr. Delapoor, avowing himself the person who had sent her the ring as a token of his affectionate remembrance of her, and faithful adherence to his first vows, through many years of absence, and a long course of various adventures; that he still considered himself as her husband in heart; and hearing with the deepest concern that her case was such as made it necessary for her to resort to Lisbon, he had determined to hasten thither himself, in the hope that he might be permitted there to devote his honourable attentions to her service, and approve himself still gratefully impressed with that pure but ardent attachment, which no
absence

absence had been able to abate, and which to the last hour of life he should unalterably retain.

This intelligence was in all respects most satisfactory to Henry, who had now a certainty of his father being living, and a fair prospect of retrieving his late disappointment, by a speedy meeting. We shall not be minute in detailing all that was said by the respective parties upon this interesting topic, nor shall we be more particular in stating what passed between them on the subject of Blachford's will; it may suffice to say, that Henry's disinterested renunciation of the bequest, in favour of a natural heir, met with full approbation and applause from his generous mother, who concluded her remarks upon the transaction, by declaring, that from the first moment she had heard of it, she had never cordially reconciled herself to the circumstance of her son's being made heir to a fortune so amassed and so devised, which not only robbed him of the credit of forgiving a repentant enemy, freely and unconditionally, but which would probably involve him in trouble and perplexity, and set him forth to the world under a suspicion of foul dealing, which she could
not

not bear to have his character exposed to, and be made a topic for detraction, for the mere worldly advantages of stepping into a man's fortune, who bore no other relation or alliance to him, than as one, who having been his enemy and intentional assassin, had by a death-bed repentance been converted to a friend and unexpected benefactor. It was therefore with the most heartfelt satisfaction she saw him endowed with spirit to judge and act so consonantly to her feelings, without any advice on her part, or any knowledge on his of the extent of her intentions towards him; which, she would now inform him, were no less than to bequeath him the whole and entire estate of her father, which by will she was invested with; a property so ample, that the superfluous bequest of Mr. Blachford was no longer worth a thought.

This led her to speak of Sir Roger, in whose hands she had lodged her will; and after enquiring of her son how he had passed his time at Manstock House, with a view to discover what the state of his heart was towards the fair Isabella, turning to him with a look of maternal affection, she said—"Ah! my beloved Henry, wou'd you know the first and warmest

warmest wish of your fond mother's heart, it is that you may gain an interest with that lovely girl, so form'd to make you happy: I know her to be so devoted to her father, as to have profess'd certain resolutions, which I hold to be romantic; and I can well believe it must be a lover of no common qualities; that can induce her to forego them; but as you cannot in your present unacknowledg'd character hope to engage the consent of my uncle, nor honourably make known your real pretensions to Isabella herself, I have that perfect trust in her honour, that I am ready to confide to her alone the secret of your being my son, if you can give me hope there is that disposition in her, which, upon this discovery, might be improv'd to your advantage: tell me therefore with sincerity how you stand in her good graces, and to-morrow, when she and I are alone at Manstock, I will be your advocate, and throw myself upon her candour for your sake."

"Heaven bless you for your goodness!" cried Henry; "how can I ever thank you as I ought? What can I say or do, or undertake for your sake, that may but in the least degree demonstrate to you my gratitude for all your bounties?"

bounties? Let me attempt some act of duty, which no son has ever yet aspir'd to! let me forbear to think of love and Isabella, whilst your life, so dear to me above all earthly blessings, hangs in this dangerous suspense. I will not suffer any other thought to lodge within my heart: Oh! my beloved honour'd mother, let me devote myself to you alone."

Here he again cast himself at her feet, whilst she threw her arms about his neck and pressed him to her bosom;—"My son! my soul!" she cried, "this transport of affection is a cordial to your sick mother, that gives her a new life: your love revives me, my dear child, and seems to animate my languid frame with health and strength. Is it not fit that I should live for him that gives me life? And now, my son, without more questioning, I have found you out; your heart is in my sight; I see the lovely Isabella has possession of it. How shou'd it be otherwise? How should such beauty, modesty, good sense, and sweetness fail to gain the affections of a soul congenial to her own? You love her, Henry, and as it is not in your nature to prevaricate, it is not in your nature to deny it."

At this moment Zachary Cawdle entered
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the apartment, bearing in his hand a phial, which, although its contents were of a restorative quality, we doubt if his patient was not more annoyed by his interruption, than profited by his cordial.

CHAPTER VI.

The Conference is interrupted, resumed, and concluded.

THOUGH Zachary was informed that Henry was with his patient, and knew, without being informed, that the minutes of their privacy were extremely precious, yet as he was fixt in the opinion that all things ought to give way to medicine and method, he did not permit any scruples to stop him, as soon as ever the clock gave notice that the four hours draught was in turn to be repeated. In this instance however, the feelings of the son did not entirely correspond with those of the mother, and the interruption that gave pain to her, was to him a sensible relief, for in this interval of time he had so far recollected himself, as to be prepared against the dilemma,

to which he was now driven with respect to Isabella. The first caution, that occurred to his thoughts, was to divert Lady Crowbery from her proposal of divulging the secret of his birth to Miss Manstock, or taking any measures with that young lady for interesting her in his favour, esteeming it unfair that any attempt should be made on her affections on his behalf, circumstanced as he was with respect to Fanny Claypole: the next thing that struck him, was the propriety of holding back from his mother the vexatious embarrassment he was involved in with the lady last mentioned, at least till the result of her uncle's report, and her resolutions thereupon, were made known to him. From the language lately held by Mr. Claypole he still nourished a faint hope that it was possible he might be set loose from his unfortunate engagement, an emancipation that he would have thought cheaply purchased by the sacrifice of Blachford's legacy; and in this interim, why was he to be the first to publish an affair not over delicate in the recital, and certainly not very reputable to the lady in question? If he was dismissed, the least he could do was to keep his own secret; if not, it became his interest

to uphold her reputation by all the means in his power : he therefore prudently determined not to open himself on this painful and afflicting subject.

No sooner had the punctual man of medicine left them at liberty to resume their conversation, than Henry, taking up the subject where Lady Crowbery had left it, addressed himself to her as follows :—" I shou'd be asham'd of prevarication in your presence, more especially as you declare that my heart is in your sight, which that it may deserve to be, both now and for ever, it behoves me to keep it clear from dissimulation and hypocrisy : I am flatter'd therefore, when you say that you discern in it affection and esteem for the loveliest and most amiable of her sex, as I must own you wou'd have reason to turn away your eyes with loathing and aversion had you found it unempassion'd by her charms or insensible to her perfections. Blest indeed must be the man who cou'd boast of the possession of a heart like her's, and whose pretensions might be sanction'd by her father's free consent ; but as I hold myself excluded from all chance of such a blessing, and am persuaded that my destiny is otherwise direct-

ed, I do most earnestly implore my kind and generous mother, not only not to let the secret of my birth, and the too liberal disposition of her fortune, pass her lips, but also to refrain from moving the soft heart of Isabella in my favour: let that sweet nature be at peace, nor stir her any farther to a thought of me, than as of one who knows himself unworthy her regards, and hopelessly admires and honours her. If I had ever any place in her affections, let it wear out by absence; let me, like her, devote myself to filial duty, and then, although our objects are alike, our destinations will be widely apart: Lisbon and Manstock House will make a chasm between us, over which I hope no sigh of her's will ever pass. That you believe me worthy such a blessing is an honour above all merit; that you would risque your secret, and engage yourself to plead for me to Isabella, is a mark of your benevolence, for which I am ever bound to you; but I most solemnly implore you for the present to withhold it."

"Well, my dear Henry," the tender mother replied, "I'll not go counter to your wishes, but give you credit for the principle on which you act, though I confess you puzzle and sur-
prize

prize me : reasons I must suppose you have, more than you think it needful to display ; and as I have firm reliance on your rectitude of thought and conduct, I will not embarrass you with any questions on this point. Are we to meet at Manstock House ?”

“ With your permission, no : I look to join the ship to-morrow.”

“ I hope you have no farther differences to adjust with Captain Crowbery.”

“ None,” replied Henry ; “ absolutely none, upon my honour ; I am in perfect reconciliation with that gentleman, and hold myself for ever bound to testify to his most honourable and manly behaviour in an affair, where I was much too warm.”

“ Have you any thing in commission for me to say to my uncle ?”

“ Nothing, but my most grateful thanks for all his goodness.”

“ And what to Isabella ?”

“ Oh ! my dear Madam,” exclaimed Henry, “ why that question ? Let me conceive in silence, but not vent those wishes even in a whisper : ask me not what to Isabella ; my whole soul is her’s, yet wou’d my tongue be the veriest traitor to the cause of honour and

humanity, were it to tell her how I doat upon her. By the love you bear me, I conjure you do not let her know the insolent confession, which your sudden question has drawn from me: 'twill ruin me for ever in her thoughts, if she shou'd hear that I presume so much as but to name her, though it were in my prayers."

"What is this you tell me?" she cried. "Now, Henry, now I own you rouse my curiosity to know what thought so dreadful harbours in your heart. What have you done to ruin yourself with Isabella? Confess, for the alarm is terrible; surely, my son, surely your passion has not master'd your respect."

"Just Heaven renounce me, if in thought I could offend against such purity! No, Madam," he cried, "no, your son is not a savage; and if I were, her virtue wou'd restrain and awe the wildest and the worst of natures."

"What then," said she, "reduces you to hold this language? 'Tis not mere respect that dictates to you words like those you utter'd; the most humble suppliant, nay, Henry, the most abject self-convicted offender
wou'd

wou'd not so address himself to any human being."

"What have I said?" resumed he: "Oh! that I could recal my words; but you will not release them. What can I say? Must I confess to you I have offended Isabella past redemption? Shock'd her chaste eyes, revolted her pure nature; not indeed in her own person; that were to sin as it were against Heaven; but in the person of another, far, far different, alas! from her. There let me stop; press me no farther I conjure you; let her divulge the rest; and if she does, defend me not, dear mother, but tell her I am conscience-smitten, self-condemn'd, and punish'd more than ever wretch was punish'd, in the loss of her esteem."

"If I did not persuade myself," she replied, "that you are incapable of any thing that's grossly wrong, I should be truly wretched; but as I am firm in that persuasion, and satisfied by your assurance that the offence does not personally affect my cousin Isabella, I will not believe that you need absolutely to despair of pardon: I guess it is some giddy boyish scrape, which you have fallen into, and I can also guess with whom; but lovers use strong
D 3 language

language when they speak of their quarrels, and I can allow a great deal for your extraordinary sensibility ; a frown, a pout, a pettish word can make strange havoc with a heart feeling and fond as your's ; but Isabella will forgive you ; take my word for it, Henry, I shall find a soft moment to make your peace, and send you a full pardon, upon proper submission and atonement."

Henry had by this time collected his thoughts sufficiently to see the danger into which he had been surprized, and how far he had outstept discretion in this unguarded declaration of his passion ; he was therefore eager to avail himself of the opening, which his mother's temperate answer gave him, for drawing back in time to save himself, without committing Fanny Claypole ; and though it was pretty clear that Lady Crowbery's suspicion pointed at Susan May, yet as she was not directly named, and time would quickly serve for him to clear her character, he acquiesced in the deception, and was silent.

It was now time to put an end to their conference ; but before this took place, he was fain to compound for a release from all further enquiries, by promising to remain where he

was

was during the whole of the next day, when he was to hold himself amenable to any summons that his mother, after her arrival at Manstock House, might think fit to send him. This compromise being acceded to on his part, and sealed with a maternal embrace on that of Lady Crowbery, they tenderly took leave of each other, and parted.

CHAPTER VII.

The Penitent, on his Death-bed, atones to Justice.

WHEN Henry arrived at the cottage, he found the nurse with Susan May's child waiting his return: in a few minutes after, the chaise with the mother herself drove to the door. Ezekiel Daw was at this time in attendance upon his penitent. Henry put the nurse and child into the inner chamber, and no third person being present at his meeting with Susan, he proceeded without interruption to explain to her the purposes for which he had called her from Manstock House, and in speaking of her connection with Blachford,

treated her feelings with such delicacy (assuring her, that by the confession of her seducer she would stand acquitted to all that heard the story) that his consideration for her character, no less than the very extraordinary sacrifice he had made to her interest, so affected her, as to leave her no other powers of expressing her gratitude, except what her tears, which flowed in plenty, could supply.

“Wonder not,” he cried, “at what I have done, as if it was a case uncommon for a man to be just and honest. What have I to do with Blachford and his money? If he had bequeath’d it to me, and died before I had made this discovery of the claim you have upon him, I shou’d have held myself obliged in conscience to make over what he left me to your son and you. Now I do not wish to make a parade of my disinterestedness, and shou’d hold it rather as an affront to be complimented for an act of justice, regarding it as a hint, that they suspected me to be a knave; I therefore think myself very happy to have found your secret out in time, to make that an act of atonement on his part, which, had it devolv’d upon me, wou’d have put me to the trouble of a conveyance, and annoy’d me very probably

bably with a great deal of that popularity and applause, which some people are flatter'd with, but which I have no taste for."

When Henry, by this and other representations like this, perceived that he had in some degree quieted the agitation of Susan's spirits, he put her in mind to make ready for an interview with the father of her child, and having stept into the inner room, he presented to her sight the child itself, giving it into her arms, and declaring it to be his ward, and the infant heir of Blachford. The beauty of the child, the ecstasy of the mother, the astonishment of the nurse, and the benevolence depicted in the features of our blooming hero, composed a group of characters not totally unworthy the historic pencil of *the painter of the passions*.

The generous heart of Henry, in the contemplation of this scene, enjoyed a more luxurious banquet than the wealth of Blachford could have purchased. True gratitude, like deep-felt woe, is not to be discharged by words; Susan was mute, and once, if Henry had not stopt her, she was falling at his feet—"What are you about to do?" he cried, "Remember, you once tender'd me your all; I'm

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only

only paying you with what is not my own."— And now bidding her take heart and follow him, he proceeded with her, the infant, and the nurse, to the sick man's house: they were admitted without delay; Blachford was impatiently expecting them, and Ezekiel Daw was in the chamber with him. Henry took the child in his arms, and advancing to the couch, presented it to its father—"I have brought," he cried, "two comforters to visit you; the one, in the person of this smiling cherub, seems the very emblem of peace; the other, (pointing to Susan as he spoke) by your justice reinstated in her innocence, and indemnified for her injuries, will heal those inward pains that agonize us more than all our fleshly wounds: accept them, cherish them, embrace them; they will brighten every moment of your life, and the last moment more than all; in this life, they will be the witnesses and recorders of your penitence, in the life to come your advocates and intercessors at the throne of mercy."—Blachford took the child in his arms, and lifting up his eyes, exclaimed—"The Lord of mercy grant their intercessions may avail!"—"Amen!" echoed the pious Ezekiel, from a corner of the room, to which he

he had retreated, and where, dropping on his knees, he silently put up a fervent and (let us hope) not ineffectual prayer.

Blachford, whose mind was now prepared for death, and felt the awful coming on, was instant in his wishes to complete the last remaining task he had to do on earth, whilst yet his senses were entire. The lawyer was in waiting, and Zachary, with his sub-surgeon Kinloch, coming in most opportunely at the instant, all things seemed to favour the important work, and nothing now was wanting but the concluding forms to make it perfect. Blachford was raised upon his couch to sign and seal; the materials were set before him, the witnesses stood round him, when turning his eyes on Zachary first, and next on Kinloch, he said,—“ I call upon you, gentlemen, to attest upon the faith of honest men, and able judges of my situation, that I am now in mental faculties sound and competent to execute this deed, declaring it my will and testament, by which I make this infant, born of Susan May here present, and my son, of her begotten out of wedlock, sole heir of all my property, save what is herein given and bequeathed to her, the mother, by annuity charged

on the estate; also one small acknowledgment of five hundred pounds to this my executor, and guardian of my son, Henry Fitzhenry, so called, at whose solicitation, voluntarily and generously made, I have revoked the former disposition of my affairs in his behalf. A most disinterested and conscientious act it was, and I do pray him to accept this small bequest in token of my love and his forgiveness, conscious as I am of his unequalled worth, and deeply penitent for all that I have said, or done, or meditated in his wrong: and further, I enjoin and strictly charge the mother of my child to be observant of his counsel and advice, and firmly to impress upon the mind of this her infant, as he grows to years of reason and reflection, what he owes to this his benefactor, by whose special bounty he is now endow'd with affluence, that else it never cou'd have been his fortune to enjoy."

Having said this, and the appeal he had made to Zachary and his attendant being answered with assurances of their entire conviction of his being in perfect possession of his senses (a point indeed which no one of his hearers could be deceived in) he signed and sealed his will, and, after it was witnessed, delivered.

livered it to Henry. Exhausted by these efforts, he began so evidently to droop, that Doctor Cawdle, in virtue of his medical authority, dismissed the whole company. The mother, child and nurse were by Blachford's desire accommodated with beds in his house; Henry contented himself with his quarters at the cottage; but having hitherto abstained from asking any questions about a matter that was nearest to his heart, and the business to which he had devoted his first attention being so happily concluded, he became impatient for a few minutes in private with his friend Susan. Of this wished-for opportunity he was soon put in possession; for Ezekiel, on whose mind these events had made a powerful impression, had walked home in deep meditation, without saying a word to any body; whereupon Susan, having given her boy in charge to the nurse, retired with Henry into Blachford's parlour. It was the very room where the one party had been arraigned for his life, and the other despoiled of her innocence. What mighty revolutions can a few short days effect! the offender at the point of death, the sufferers restored to their character, and the property of the guilty, including the very scene

of his criminality, actually made over as an atonement to the guiltless.

Henry, to prevent interruption, made fast the door, and taking Susan by the hand, led her to a chair: she was still trembling with agitation; tremors of another sort would have possessed her, had Henry so done a while ago: she now looked up to him with awful admiration; love, tempered with respect, gave that chaste expression to her eyes, which on some past occasions had exhibited affections not so pure: passions as irresistible as that which now had command of her more than once had impelled her to embrace him wantonly in her arms; pure gratitude, unmixed with any grosser impulse, now threw her, bathed in tears, upon his neck: he pressed her tenderly to his bosom, spoke of the kindnesses she had so often shewn him, and asserted obligations received on his part, prior and superior to these conferred on her; when, having soothed her in this generous manner for some minutes—
“Now tell me, I conjure you,” he cried,
“and tell me truly, am I totally undone in the opinion of your lovely mistress?”——
“Alas!” she replied, “what can I tell you, my dear friend and benefactor? certain it is,
that

that gentle heart is wounded through and through; but whether more by displeasure than by sorrow I am yet to learn. She is very silent on the subject, and it is not from her lips that the story has escap'd; it is Miss Claypole herself and her politic uncle (pardon me, if I cannot speak of them with the respect that becomes me) who have made public what my young lady's delicacy never would have spoken of, and what their's, one should have thought, would have been interested to conceal. But when Miss thought fit to blazon her own shame, by bouncing out of the house, and betaking herself to the parsonage, as if she had been flying from her persecutors, the whole family were 'up in arms, as I may say, and every mouth was open'd to cry shame upon her. 'Tis not to be told with what a confidence she has carried it off, venting herself against my meek young lady in a manner that I am sure you wou'd detest her for. Ah! my beloved friend, where were your eyes, your heart, your understanding, during that fatal gallery-adventure? I can no otherwise account for it, than by supposing you was not in your senses at the moment; knowing how temperate you are, and unaccustom'd to ex-

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cess, I must impute it to the effects of the wine you drank upon the election meeting, and so I told my Lady."—" You told her true," said Henry; " but what then? One bestiality cannot excuse another."

" Pardon me," rejoined Susan, " her candour found a motive for excusing it; but no candour can justify the sacrifice you are making of your happiness, if the report be true, which that young madam circulates, that you are pledg'd to her for marriage. Heaven forbid that I shou'd see that day! Surely, surely you have not madly made that promise; why, 'tis ruin, misery, disgrace inevitable! Stop me, if I proceed too far; I shou'd be sorry to offend you; but indeed, my dear Sir, every body knows, and every body says, without scruple, what Miss Clappole is."

" What is she? I am not offended—speak."

" What is she! A coquette, a flirt, a wanton: one that will go great lengths, if not all; but that perhaps you can best tell: be that however as it may, you are not the only favour'd lover; others, and not a few, have been as kindly treated as yourself: her uncle knows that well enough, and is indeed a generous man to part with what he's tir'd of, and
knows

knows to be a property that hangs upon his hands, and keeps him in alarm for every day that passes till he is rid of her. Believe me, my dear Sir, that uncle is a deep one; not a servant in the family but laments the influence he has over their good master; and though Miss Manstock is too delicate to speak out, I can discover to a certainty that she is not mistaken in his character; no, nor my Lady Crowbery neither, though it is given out in the house that he is to succeed to your Mr. Ratcliffe's living."

"Indeed!" cried Henry, "is that said? 'Tis time for me to counteract him in those hopes. Claypole succeed my friend! my honour'd friend! Impossible! that shall never take place."—Observing Susan look at him with surprize, he recollected himself, and in an humble tone added,—“At least if I have any interest with the lady patroness.”—Susan resumed her discourse—“And now,” said she, “Miss Claypole gives it out that she was frightened by the thunder-storm, and fainted in your arms: if it were so, what then? I hope you are not bound to marry the first lady that faints in your arms: but who believes that she was frightened? Nobody; she is not of the sort

to be so easily frightened; you must have known, if you had been yourself, that it was all put on to win you to her ways. The servants all declare that she was fit to eat you up, as they describe it; every one saw that, and knew what she was driving at: she dogg'd you to the gallery, and there the lucky storm help'd forward her determin'd scheme to take you in the very cue for mischief, heated with wine, half tipsy, and less than half yourself. Oh, Henry, Henry! (suffer me this once to address you thus familiarly) can I not speak in proof of your forbearance; of your self-command? Have I not a right to say, though saying it, I ought to blush at the recollection, that I have found you master of yourself, when I have lost all government of reason in the excess of my love to you? How often and how impetuously has passion hurried me into your arms, although no lucky storm was there commodiously to favour my fond wishes? yet you have withstood all trials; but perhaps nature has given her charms and powers to tempt, which I am not possess'd of; but this is true, as truth itself can witness, that no concessions on my part, no promise on your's, shou'd have prevail'd with me, even when
your

your fortune was at the lowest ebb, to have trepan'd you into marriage, conscious as I was that I had not that maiden purity to give, which you had so much right to expect. You know, full well you know, dearest and best of friends, there was a time, when in our sports and frolics by the way, as we return'd from making our purchases, that when you glanc'd at marriage, I drew back at once, and oftentimes I've been upon the point of telling you this tale of my seduction, had you not always seiz'd those dangerous moments to cut short our conversation, and preserve my virtue and your own: and now, what mighty obligation can you have to this seducing wanton, though we'll suppose you have gone beyond that limit where discretion shou'd have stop'd? Grant that you have; whose virtue suffer'd most by the surprise? your's or the lady's? Because she throws away her reputation, must you marry her?"

"Before I answer to that question," replied Henry, "let me clear up one error. If Miss Claypole was inviolate before our meeting in that odious gallery, I promise you she left it as she enter'd it for me: her favours did not go the length you hint at. The vision of an angel

angel scar'd me from her embrace ; the frown of purity itself subdued my guilty passions, and I fled from her allurements : but as I hold it due from every man of honour to make atonement for even the slightest stain he casts upon the fame of a woman of character, I tender'd her the only reparation in my power ; my hand, if that cou'd heal the injury. She took my hand, alas ! and broke my heart."

"Thank Heaven!" cried Susan, "you have taken one weight from my mind ; the main point was not carried ; she has felt one disappointment, and I'll engage it was a cutting one. Now I can understand the reason for her shifting to the vicarage ; 'tis all a trap to catch you, and make sure of you ; she thinks your honour then wou'd seal the bargain, and surrender you for life the dupe of her contrivances ; but go not near her, I conjure you ; let not that uncle, who is her setter, draw you in to visit her alone ; you are ruin'd if you do. As for a word dropt in an unguarded moment, when you was not in clear possession of your reason, that I persuade myself you will not think yourself oblig'd to abide by, nor sacrifice the happiness of your whole life for a romantic punctilio."

Henry

Henry shook his head: she proceeded—
“ Now I begin to have more than a dawn of hope. Oh! let me once come to the ear of my dear young lady, and I’ll pledge myself that all will be set straight. She loves you at her heart; I know she does; nay, she has own’d it to me in so many words. Vext as she was, and mortified to the very soul at your proceeding, still, when she surpris’d me reading your kind note on the morning of your leaving us, and saw the generous gift that it inclos’d, understanding it was a farewell token to my mother before you left us and went out to sea, the colour fled her cheeks, her eyes quiver’d in their lids, and she dropt, sweet afflicted soul, like a blossom from the stalk, lifeless into my arms. If this is not the very test of love, what is it? Ah! my dear, dear friend, do but once shake off this flirting damsel, and Miss Manstock is your own.”

“ And what can be so cutting as that thought?” said Henry. “ What can afflict me deeper than to reflect I had a chance of happiness, and threw it wantonly away?”

“ Who says that it is thrown away,” replied Susan? “ I have conviction to the contrary.”
—(Here she drew a letter from her pocket.)

“ Does

“Does this appear like anger?” she demanded.—“Here is a note penn’d with her own fair hand; it is entrusted to me on this condition, only to be deliver’d to you, if you are disengag’d from Fanny Claypole.”—“Stop then,” cried Henry; “on these terms I must not take it, blest’d as I shou’d be.”—“What am I to infer from this?” said she.—“That I will not permit you to break through conditions, which Miss Manstock has impos’d.”—“But what if I am privy to the contents?”—“Let them be sacred,” he rejoined; “breathe not a syllable, however delightful to my ears: I am not disengag’d from Miss Claypole, and therefore must not violate the seal, nor secretly purloin the purport of that letter, entrusted to you under those restrictions: remember, Susan, the same principle, which led me to decline the bequest of Mr. Blackford, now obliges me to deny myself the transport which the perusal of that angel’s favour wou’d bestow.”—“What do I hear?” cried Susan.—“Are you then——?”—“Undone!” said Henry, and departed.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Incident of the Tragic Cast.

IF there is not a secret joy in being strictly faithful to the rigid laws of honour, our hero must have been at this moment of all men most miserable; for he might well presume that Isabella's letter was a kind one; and what had this world to give him comparable to a testimony of her kindness? Nothing but the consciousness of acting right. Educated in the most correct adherence to truth and rectitude, he had no sophistry to palliate the slightest deviation from them, and shuddered at deceit however qualified. Stung to the quick by his remorse for having been a party in the cause, if not the cause itself, of Fanny Claypole's misbehaviour, he took her shame upon himself; and vexed at the recollection of his own weak facility in falling in with her advances, he determined to meet the consequences he had drawn upon himself, unless rescued either by her voluntary release, or some such unequivocal proofs of her misconduct as might

might justify him in renouncing the connection. Upon his return to the cottage, he found Ezekiel in the act of consoling himself with his afternoon's pipe, whilst his bible laid open on the table before him. The pious creature was in profound meditation upon the book of Proverbs, on which he was founding an admonitory discourse for the edification of Susan May, whom, though he had exculpated in the face of her reverend accuser, yet it must be owned to have been a slight stretch upon the truth of his opinion, extorted from him in his zeal for saying the best of a friend, and for opposing any sentiment of Claypole, who was just then in no high favour with him, or, more properly speaking, in sovereign contempt. Occupied in this manner, he took so little notice of Henry, on his coming into the room, that it might be doubted if he saw him; and Henry, on his part, had his thoughts too much employed to solicit his attention.

A messenger now rode up to the door, and being accosted by Henry, put a letter into his hands, the contents of which were as follows:—

“ My uncle, who sees most things in a false
“ light, thinks you have done very unwisely in
“ declining

“ declining Blachford’s fortune; but money is
“ his god, and love is mine. I build my happiness
“ upon better things than riches, and admire your
“ spirit; though I must own it wou’d not have
“ been amiss had you taken the fellow’s dirty
“ pelf, rather than it shou’d fall into the hands
“ of those low creatures, who are in the way
“ now to profit by it. I shou’d like to live at
“ Crowbery, and have particular reasons for
“ wishing you to reserve that place at least to
“ yourself, whatever becomes of the rest of the
“ property. I have quitted the old mansion
“ and its formal inhabitants, and am now en-
“ tirely alone in my uncle’s house; if you have
“ any pity for a solitary damsel, you will come
“ to me without delay: here are no spirits to
“ haunt us, nor any galleries in which they
“ walk by night. My house, my heart, my
“ arms are open to receive you. What can
“ my teasing uncle mean by telling me you
“ are going out of England without seeing me?
“ that I am sure is impossible; that I will not
“ believe: the man of my choice will never
“ treat me so; he has too much honour, too
“ much love, too much pity for a fond doating
“ heart, which such neglect wou’d break. I
“ shall look for you this night, this happy
VOL. III. E “ night;

“ night; if not, with the first dawn of day at
 “ farthest; longer than till then I cannot live
 “ without you; think what I am suffering till
 “ I see you; lost to all the world but you, I
 “ have nothing to regret so you are faithful,
 “ and delay not to bless

“ Your fond expecting

“ FRANCES CLAYPOLE.”

This was a puzzling dilemma; Henry had promised his mother to obey her summons if she called him to her at Manstock-house; he could not therefore tell Miss Claypole he was going to his ship the next day, neither could he with any face come to Manstock without visiting her; if therefore he was ever to see her, better he should go before Lady Crowbery arrived at her uncle's; and whatever was to be the result of his meeting, better he should bring it to a definitive conclusion before he put himself in the way of Isabella, whose attentions to him, whilst his fate was in suspense, would embarrass him beyond measure, as not knowing how far he might be warranted in honour to receive them.

It was now about seven o'clock in an autumnal evening, the distance twelve miles, and
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the messenger was well mounted: he was a country fellow, and no domestic of Claypole's. Henry asked him if he would lend him his horse, and take money for hiring another at the post town two miles off. This proposal, backed with a piece of gold, was perfectly acceptable to the messenger, and Henry stepped into the cottage to apprise his friend Ezekiel of his motions, and to equip himself for the saddle. A very short apology satisfied Ezekiel, whose thoughts were farther from home than Henry would be at the end of his stage; as soon therefore as he had drawn on his boots, and signified his intentions of sleeping at Dame May's, he set off at a smart rate, and within the hour arrived safely at the vicarage gate.

Great was the transport of Fanny Claypole when the object of her anxious expectation presented himself to her sight; she flung the book she was reading from her, and ran with open arms, in an ecstasy, to embrace him: wild with surprize and joy, she scarce knew what she did; with her hair loose and flowing, she seemed a perfect Sybil in her phrenzy; her dress (if dress it might be called, that totally obscured no charms which nature had endowed her with) was so invitingly disposed as

shewed the effects of study and design rather than of chance or negligence ; for little was concealed that could allure, yet not so much exposed as to leave nothing for imagination to supply ; and a fairer field for excursions of that sort could hardly be found than in the form of Fanny.

When her flutter had in part subsided, she threw herself on the couch in a careless attitude, and observing that Henry kept himself aloof, and did not take her hint for seating himself by her, she demanded what was the matter with him ? had not he recovered his alarm in the gallery ? or was he waiting for another thunder storm before he could find in his heart any pity for a poor disconsolate damsel, who had no soul in the house to protect her but one old woman, who had neither eyes, ears, nor understanding ? “ Here we are,” said she, “ without one soul that will come near us for the live-long night, and what will become of me Heaven only knows, in this desolate mansion, unless you will manfully undertake to guard me, and turn into the vicar’s bed for the night.”

Henry smiled, and shook his head.—“ Positively,” resumed she, “ I cannot part from you ;

you; I wou'd as soon sleep amongst the tombs as in this dreary solitude, with no other sentinel than the snoring old dame in the garret. Now I know as well as can be, by your looks, what is passing in your mind; my uncle has been preaching to you in his canting strain; but I take no account of what he thinks or what he says; I am independent of him and the whole world; and if you suppose my peace of mind can be disturb'd by their talk, you are mistaken; where I have bestow'd my heart I am not afraid to entrust my reputation: surely, if I ask protection of you, you will not refuse it to me."

"Certainly I will not," said Henry; "but as no danger can accrue to your person, tho' I shou'd leave you, and much to your reputation if I shou'd remain with you, can there be a doubt what I ought to do?"—"Ridiculous!" resumed she, "this over-care of what the world may say, if you persist in it, will make me doubt if I have form'd a right opinion of your character. When you rejected the temptations that fortune threw before you, it was a gallant resolution; but it is no proof of spirit to decline the favours of a lady. What care I if the whole world knew that you slept in this house? The thing

speaks for itself; I am mistress of my choice, and you the man I have chosen; let the world comment upon that as it likes. I have quitted society, and put myself into solitude for your sake; to whom then but to you am I to resort for protection, for consolation, nay, for justification? Where else shall I go? To my uncle? Never; I have done with him; I renounce him; I am your's and only your's. We have interchang'd our hearts: what witnesses do we need of that? Not all the parsons in the kingdom can do more, and without this their ceremonies are but mockeries; therefore let's hear no more of this affected tenderness for reputation, this hypocrisy of sentiment, which wou'd refine away the noblest passions of the soul; let our love be without canting, our confidence without restraint; and to convince you of my sincerity in both respects, I am free to confess that it is not to any real terrors I experienc'd in the storm that you are indebted for the endearments I bestow'd on you last night; they were the free effusions of my heart, and you may tell your conscience to be quiet on that score; for it was love, my Henry, not the elements, that threw me in your power, and the same love now
courts

courts you to the same endearments, secret and secure from all disturbers of our hours so precious. Come then, throw off that cold reserve, those distant looks that have no sympathy with mine. My eyes are honest and sincere; they speak a plain intelligible language; what ails your's, that they cannot or will not understand it without compelling me, against the practice of my sex, to help you to a comment?"

"It is because I do understand their language, and feel their power," replied Henry, "that I avoid them. Either you think yourself less dangerous than you are, or me more firm than I pretend to be, when you beckon me to that couch."—He was proceeding, when she stopt him, crying out—"Come, come, there is enough of this trifling; more than enough of this ridiculous, this unmanly affectation. Beware how you provoke me; I shall become desperate if I am insulted." Regardless of these menaces, Henry kept his post, and advanced not a step towards her. She kept her eyes fixed upon him, and exclaimed—"By all the loves and graces, Henry, you have the form of an Apollo! wou'd to heaven you had his fire! Well, keep your pedestal, cold life-

less image, and let me gaze upon you till my admiration warms into idolatry; 'twill gratify your pride, perhaps, to see me kneeling at your feet and worshipping you: mark, how naturally I'll act Pygmalion's part, and make love to a statue."

This said, she started from the couch, and was advancing towards him, when, preventing her as she was in the act of dropping on her knees, he cried, "Pray, do not laugh at me; I cannot stand your ridicule."

"Vittoria!" she cried, "I've made the statue move and speak. Now, since your marble majesty can bend, be pleas'd to sit beside me. Oh! all ye gods! it smiles, it animates, it yields, it softens with the touch; happy changel! it lives! If the mere pressure of the hand does this, my arms, perhaps, may warm it into love: I'll clasp it to my heart, I'll breathe my life into its lips, and share my soul between us."

"Stop, Syren!" Henry exclaimed, "I'm not responsible for consequences thus urg'd upon me, nor am I bound in honour to repair them: whilst I believ'd your terrors in the storm had thrown you from your natural guard, and subjected you to weaknesses, which in a
more

more collected moment your virtue wou'd have spurn'd at, I felt myself a party in the treason, and tender'd you the only reparation in my power ('twas all I had to offer) my unworthy self; but when you openly declare those fears were feign'd, and freely take the blame upon yourself, you quit me of the atonement; and now again, when you return to the attack, and with such exquisite allurements tempt a man, who visits you with none but honourable purposes, and combats against nature to preserve you in that purity of character, which is your sex's ornament, I think it fair to warn you that my sentiments respecting favours in anticipation differ so essentially from your's, that she, who has been mistress to me with her own consent, shall never be my wife. Beauty, and wit, and fortune, you possess more than my hopes aspire to; but permit me to observe, that, flatter'd as I am by your attachment, chastity is a virtue indispensable in the female character, and without that I shou'd consider marriage as a certain sacrifice of happiness."

"Marriage! I laugh at it! marriage was never made for souls like mine: my love can never wait upon the lazy forms of plodding

mercenary law ; I scorn them all ; nor are you fit for the dull drudgery of that slavish state ; too young, too inexperience'd, and too choice to be made daily use of, your beauty, like a precious garment, shou'd be reserv'd for feasts and holidays ; 'twas never made for the coarse wear-and-tear of wedlock ; if you had thought of marriage you wou'd never have refused the fortune Blachford had bequeath'd you : I see it hangs upon you like a debt of honour, therefore I set you free ; I'll not exact it of you ; marry ten years hence, and marry whom you will ; of this and every other obligation honour can impose I perfectly acquit you, only for this I stipulate, I'll not be treated with contempt ; of all engagements I acquit you, but not of gratitude : Oh Henry ! have a care how you insult a woman who has broke through all reserve, and laid her heart before you : after this night you are free ; I resign you—even to Isabella."

How quick and sudden are the shifts of passion ! a word sometimes will call up a new train of thoughts, and change our resolutions in an instant. It was not virtue's self, but virtue's substitute that saved our hero ; sunk into the arms of the seducer, and resigned to
the

the temptation, the name of Isabella roused him like a spell; he started, sprung with horror from the couch, and cried, "You have redeem'd yourself and me: I leave you to your better recollection."—"Stop," she exclaimed, "unless you are resolv'd to be my murderer." Then, snatching up a sharp-pointed knife, with which she had been cutting open the leaves of her book, "by the eternal Truth," she cried, "I'll plunge this weapon in my heart if you desert me." Here she put herself into a menacing attitude, with a look of so much desperation, that Henry on the instant sprung forward, and seized her uplifted hand, to wrench the knife from her grasp: furious with rage, she struggled to keep hold of it; and in the struggle, whether purposely or accidentally we pretend not to say, lodged the point of it in his left arm, below the elbow: in the same moment he got possession of the knife, and secured it in his pocket: she probably perceived what she had done, for she stood torpid with astonishment and terror: he rang the bell with violence; an elderly woman came running to the call. "I charge you be attentive to your lady," he cried; "for she is suddenly taken ill." Then, finding that

the blood was flowing apace from the wound, and would soon discover itself if he staid any longer, he hastened out of doors, and stuffing his handkerchief up his sleeve, ran as quick as he could to the house of Goody May, which luckily was near at hand.

CHAPTER IX.

Surgeon's Work.

IT was well for our hero that he had not many paces to measure before he found an house to take shelter in; for though he held his hand close pressed upon the wound, the sluice kept running apace, and his waste of blood would not have suited a much longer march. The widow was at home, and her hospitable door stood open. "Come, Mother," cried Henry, as he entered, "I have another case for you; more work for the good Samaritan." This said, he began to strip off his coat, which had no sooner displayed to her sight an arm covered with blood, than she gave a loud shriek, started back with horror, and fell a-trembling from head to foot. "Courage! my good friend," cried the undaunted youth,

youth, with a cheering smile; "a good surgeon does not shrink at the sight of a wound."

—"Wou'd to Heaven I was a good surgeon for your sake," replied she, "or any way more able to assist you than I am.—"Take heart,"

he cried; "give me a chair to rest my arm upon in an horizontal posture, and fetch some lint to staunch the blood; then, I warrant, all will be well in a few minutes."

Cheered with these words, the good dame bestirred herself, and presently returned from her repository with a large plodget of lint steeped in friar's balsam, which she laid over the wound, and bound it up with a swathe of linen in several folds.

"Here's a piece of work," she cried; "Oh that Mr. L—— was here to dress you! but let me send post haste for Doctor Cawdle; as for myself, God help me, it pities me to the heart to see your fair flesh hack'd and hew'd in such a barbarous manner: Oh the villain that has done this! I wou'd I had him safe in fetters of iron! some murderous wretch has stabb'd you in the dark; as sure as can be 'tis that bloody Captain you fought with in the morning; he has way-laid you on the road at night; but we'll raise the neighbours, and have a hue-and-cry after him, please God! Is there to be no

end to the malice of these accursed Crowberys?"

"There are no Crowberys in the case," replied Henry, "nor any malice, so put yourself at peace, and say no more about it; 'tis an accident, and nothing more; a mere casualty, owing to my own awkwardness."—"But how did it happen?" she still demanded; "I'm positive it has been the stab of a sword, or a dagger, or a knife, or some wicked weapon or other, for it has gone in the Lord knows how far." In this manner she persisted in pressing him with enquiries, till he found no escape but by taking a little more liberty with the truth than was his custom to do, and making up as plausible a story as he could invent to account for the accident: however, she still remained incredulous, crying out, "You are too forgiving; indeed, my dear young Sir, you are much too forgiving in all conscience; and tho' to be sure humanity is very amiable, yet after all it is an act of justice to bring the guilty to punishment, and you may depend upon it they will be the death of you some time or other, tho' I hope, with God's blessing, they have miss'd their aim for this turn."

"If you will go on in a mistake, my good friend,"

friend," said Henry, "you must; so there let us leave it: I have news to tell you of your daughter, whom you seem to have forgotten." He then related to her briefly what had been passing at Blachford's, and how he had diverted that dying man's great bequest from himself to those whom he considered as having a better claim to it.

When this was disclosed to her, with the circumstance of her daughter's being a mother, (of which, strange as it may seem, she had hitherto been kept in ignorance) the variety of sensations which the discovery of facts so affecting at once excited, seemed to deprive her of speech and recollection. Henry saw the conflict of her thoughts, and perceiving that in speaking of her grand-child he had opened an affair which till then he had no notion she could be uninformed of, instantly began to explain to her, in the most consoling manner, the whole plot which Blachford and his accomplice had put in practice to obtain their wicked purposes, and entrap their innocent victim.

Here the good mother's passion broke in upon his narrative. "Monster! villain!" she exclaimed; "Oh! that I had known his go-
ings-on,

ings-on, that I might have brought him to the gallows as he deserved. What cou'd possess my child to 'screen so vile a wretch?"—"Be content," replied Henry; "he has met his doom at last; and you have now the comfort to reflect, that by escaping the punishment of the law, he has liv'd to repent, and, as far as human circumstances will admit, to atone for the crime he has perpetrated: the son, which that dark transaction brought into the world, now survives to inherit the fortune of the father, and the injur'd mother is enabled to live easy and independent for the rest of her days; and who shall arraign her character?" He then concluded with what he knew would be the most healing reflection he could suggest to her, assuring her that even Ezekiel Daw, with all his purity and preciseness, absolutely and entirely acquitted Susan May, and had asserted her innocence in the strongest terms to the Rev. Mr. Claypole, in a conversation on the subject.

As he was thus discoursing, the cloud that had gathered upon her countenance cleared away, and the shower it had been collecting began to vent itself at her eyes. Words were no longer wanting, but, like a spring repressed, burst

burst out with increased volubility ; they were the unpremeditated effusions of a heart overcharged with its own feelings ; gratitude, astonishment, joy, transported her by turns from one to the other, yet she found expressions for them all, in broken sentences, after her manner, so that it was some length of time whilst Henry was fain to give patient hearing to her rhapsodies before he could perceive her spirits to subside into any tolerable degree of calmness ; and perhaps it was more owing to her being exhausted, than to any efforts on his part, when at last she became quiet and composed.

This interval, however, was but short ; for soon the recollection of his wound seized her afresh, and she began to moan and lament over him more piteously than at first : her imagination painted him expiring under the stab of an assassin ; all his noble generous acts rose in review ; accumulated obligations pressed upon her memory with such overwhelming weight, that her grateful soul sunk under it, and she cast herself prostrate at his feet, embracing them, and crying out, in broken accents, “ The Lord of mercy save you ! the widow’s prayers protect and draw a blessing on you, in return for all your bounteous goodness.”

ness, and for this your unspeakable tenderness in softening to my poor heart an event that wou'd else have broken it, had any other tongue but your's reveal'd this dreadful secret to me!"

Here she was called off by a messenger sent in great haste from the vicarage to claim her instant assistance to Miss Claypole, who had been in strong hysterics since Henry had left her, and so terrified the old woman, her only attendant, that, after rousing the cottagers at next door, she had dispatched one of them to Dame May, as a person of skill in such cases, and stocked with medicines to relieve them. The dame had great scruples about leaving her wounded friend; but Henry insisting upon it, she obeyed the summons, and departed, taking with her a competent provision of such nostrums as she judged proper for the occasion.

In less than an hour she returned, having left her patient in a convalescent state; but in this period the hysteric lady had in her ramblings been so communicative, that the good dame, who had at least as much curiosity as came to the share of any one individual, had perfectly informed herself of every particular that could elucidate the mystery of our hero's pretended

pretended accident: fraught with this information, she soon gave him to understand that she was no longer imposed upon, though he still persisted in taking it upon himself as a chance blow in the struggle, and that he was positive the lady had no serious intention of doing any injury either to him or herself. As the dame, however, was strenuous in unbelief, and he found himself rather faint and exhausted by loss of blood, he cut short the argument, by desiring her to prepare Ezekiel's bed for his repose; but as he well knew her passion for telling news was not a whit inferior to her pleasure in hearing it, he was very earnest with her to keep secret what she had heard from Fanny Claypole, or rather what she herself suggested from the ramblings of a disordered imagination, stating to her how extremely dishonourable it would be in her, who acted in a medical capacity, to disclose the secrets of a patient, which, he observed, would be a heinous sin against the inviolable free-masonry of the faculty.

Henry retired to his repose with the pleasing reflection that he had compounded a very heavy penalty with a slight fine, for such he now considered his wound to be; and indeed
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the pure habit of his body would have accommodated itself to a demand of a more serious nature than this was likely to prove; for the knife had only pierced the fleshy part of his arm, without any material injury: neither was he the less happy in his present quarters for the testimony which every thing about him bore to the taste and benignity of the beloved person who had provided them: every object he now looked upon, every comfort he enjoyed, was of Isabella's bestowing; and whilst he fed on that delightful recollection, no wonder if the grateful approaches of sleep, so sweetly recommended, stole upon his senses with peculiar softness, till, by the magic of his dream, the air-drawn image of his beautiful Isabella rose to view, graced with ten thousand charms, and pictured to the height of fancy's warmest colouring, kind, happy, greeting him with smiles of love, consenting, melting into soft desires, and self-surrendered to his fond embrace.

CHAPTER X.

Our wounded Hero bleeds afresh.

THE next morning Henry rose with recruited strength: the air was so fresh, and the sun so gay, that if we had any ambition to emulate our brother novelists in description, here is the very moment for it; but we decline the opportunity.

Dame May examin'd his wound, and perceiving that Dame Nature was in the humour to take the cure out of her hands, humbly resigned the task into her care, and contented herself with the simple application of a fresh pledget of dry lint, and swath'd it as before. She now set out her tea-table in its holiday trim, and administer'd the ceremonies of breakfast in her very best stile: when this service was dispatch'd, she left her guest in possession of her parlour, and address'd herself to her own domestic affairs in another quarter.

She had not left him many minutes, when her lovely patroness stept into the house, unseen by Henry;—"It occurs to me," said Isabella to the dame, "that something may
be

be wanting in your friend Mr. Daw's apartment, and therefore I shou'd be glad to look it over before he arrives."—Without stopping for an answer, she nimbly ascended the stairs. The good dame's thoughts were rather from home at that moment, and not present to the recollection that Henry's bed-chamber was not exactly in a state fit to receive the visit of a young lady; instead therefore of stopping her on the stairs, she hobbled after her into the room;—"Heyday," cried Isabella, upon looking about her, "what is this? somebody has slept here I perceive."—"Lackaday!" exclaimed the dame, "I humbly ask your pardon for not stopping you in time. Dear good young lady, be not offended with me; but indeed you was so nimble, and took me, as I may say, at such a nonplus, that I never thought to tell you that the chamber was not fit for you to come into. Sure enough, though, it was my sweet dear young friend, Mr. Henry himself, who reposed himself in that bed last night, (Heaven bless him!) and I have not had leisure yet to set the room to rights."

"Did he sleep here?" said the lovely intruder, as she was quitting the chamber; and just then recollecting that she was leaving the

survey

Survey unfinished, which she came to make, stopt and cast her eyes deliberately round the room, observing that she wish'd it was more worthy of her guest, "But I hope at least," added she, with an encouraging smile, "you took care to air it well for your friend and benefactor."—"Heaven forbid!" cried Goody May, "that I should bring his precious life into danger; there are wretches enough in this world too ready to do that, the more shame their's; but I say nothing; the Lord he knows their hearts and mine also, how it bleeds for him at this moment; and that's the reason I was so absent in my duty to you. Well, to be sure, the wickedness of some folks is surprising; I am sure it will be more God's mercy than my skill, if my dear Mr. Henry escapes out of their murderous hands alive."

"Bless me!" cried Isabella, "I protest you startle me. Is Mr. Henry now in the house?" Goody May answering in the affirmative, Isabella came silently down the stairs, and understanding he was in the parlour, turned into the common room which was opposite to it, making a sign to her follower to do the same. Here she immediately began a course of questions, which soon betrayed the communica-
tive

tive dame into so complete a recital of every circumstance respecting Henry's wound, that nothing she had collected from Miss Claypole in her fit, and which Henry had conjured her to keep secret, was untold. There is reason to believe, this poor woman wou'd have gone to death for Henry's sake, whilst she was thus running counter to his injunctions; but to deny herself the pleasure of broaching a piece of news, particularly one so honourable to Henry, and so interesting to the hearer, was a virtue which her nature could not reach; a sacrifice her resolution was not equal to.

Henry, in the meanwhile, unconscious of what was passing so near him, sat in the little parlour with his eyes fixt upon the print of Isabella's father, that hung opposite to him, pondering in his mind the lovely vision of the preceding night, his imagination fascinated with the contemplation of her matchless beauty, her engaging manners, and attractive graces, when behold the sound of the lock drew his eyes to the door, which, gently opening, disclosed to his sight the very object of his meditations in her existing and substantial form, more exquisitely beautiful than any shade that fancy ever pictured in the poet's brain: surprised,

prized, enraptured, he started from his chair, and in the momentary transport that deprived him of reflection, ran and caught her in his arms: instantly undeceived, and convinced it was no shadow he embraced, terrified at what he had done, he dropt upon his knee, and beg'd for pardon.—“I was deceiv'd,” he cried; “my mind had left me, and was stray'd beyond realities: I saw you in my meditations, and, like a man delirious, seiz'd what in my better senses I would not offend for worlds, and know myself unworthy to approach.”

What passed in Isabella's mind, whilst Henry was thus pleading for pardon at her feet, words will not describe, for she made use of none: it was not anger, for her looks were melting soft; it could not but be modesty, for blushes spread all over her fair face; no doubt but sensibility had a share in it, for tears bedewed her cheeks.

He was preparing to proceed with his apology, when a shriek from Isabella stopt his speech, and instantly he perceived the blood streaming from his wound.—“Behold,” he cried, “how justly I am brought to recollection of my offence.” Isabella, in the mean time, frightened past the power of motion,

kept calling out for Goody May. It was obvious that her sudden appearance had surprised him into an exertion, that had opened his wound afresh, when he inconsiderately threw his arms about her waste. The poor woman, terrified with what she heard and saw, in her confusion scarce knew what to do first; but recollecting, after a few moments, the process she had before observed, begged Isabella to assist in opening his coat sleeve, whilst she hastened to her repository for means to stop the blood. Isabella, pale and trembling as she was, summoned spirits to assist in supporting his arm, as well as in the operation of untying the tapes Goody May had sewed upon his sleeve, which she had ripped open over the wounded part. The business most immediately necessary was soon effected by the application of fresh lint and the former styptic; but Isabella's horrors at the glimpse she had of his wound were not so soon dismissed. Henry's attention was so totally absorbed in his care for his fair assistant, that he seemed to have no sense of what was doing to himself, and he would fain have dismissed the operator for hartshorn and water, before she had secured the bandage; but when he felt the
gentle

gentle touch of Isabella, engaged in the work jointly with the old woman,—“Who wou’d not gladly shed his blood,” he cried, “for such an honour?” and now a certain tender glance from Isabella’s eyes made answer in a flattering language, that the heart of our hero, so far from sinking under its loss, seemed to beat with double energy and spirit.

The hartshorn and water was now brought, Isabella recovered, and her alarm having subsided, the prudent dame thought her presence was no longer necessary, and retired.

“We look’d for you last night,” said Isabella; “my father charg’d Susan with a message to that purpose, and to prevent mistakes I wrote you a short note; but I understand from Susan that you did not receive it.”

“I hope,” replied he, fixing his eyes upon the floor, “she told you at the same time upon what motive I denied myself that happiness.”

“She did,” rejoined Isabella; “the letter I received from her this morning does credit to her heart and justice to your honour, not only in the trifling matter of my note, but in a circumstance of real self-denial, in which,

permit me to say, you have given the noblest proof of an exalted generosity."

"If I merit your praise," said Henry, "in either instance, it is in that which you term the more trifling instance of the two: it is no hard task for a man not mercenary to act as I did in the affair of Blachford, for it is a victory over a mean and abject passion; but there is some struggle to obey the dictates of honour, when it calls upon us to oppose the strongest impulse and affection that the heart can feel; but your commands to Susan May were positive, and I obey'd them."

"They were calculated," she rejoined, "for your accommodation; you had another engagement, and solicitation is in that case an embarrassment to a well-bred man."

"There," said he, "you lead me to look back upon a transaction that covers me with confusion and self-reproach; yet, if it were a plea your purity might listen to, I have enough to say that wou'd acquit my conscience towards the engagement you allude to, though nothing can totally exculpate me from folly and infirmity. A fortunate explanation with Miss Claypole, yesterday evening, has set me free from all conditions of atonement,
and

and I am happy it is in my power to assert with truth, that the promise I held myself bound to make was not a composition for the loss of innocence on her part, but simply for the risque of reputation."

"Whatever you seriously assert," Isabella replied, "I implicitly believe; but when you call your explanation with that lady a fortunate one, I should suspect you are once more guilty of forgetting you have a wound, that demands more care and attention than you seem dispos'd to afford it. If you are to shed your blood with such repeated profusion in every lady's company you chance upon, and one is to give, another to renew your wounds, I think you are in a likely way to become a victim to the sex."

"I see," said Henry, smiling, "that my old prattling dame has broke faith with me, and let out all she knows, with more, perhaps, than her information warrants; but in your heavenly nature I well know there will be found a principle of candour, that can look with pity on the extravagances of an uncorrected temper, and consign them to oblivion. If the tongue of this gossip can be stopt in time, we may yet suppress a story, that wou'd

do no credit to Miss Claypole ; and in this I flatter myself your good nature will assist me. For my own part, I propose to wait here no longer than till Lady Crowbery arrives, who must pass this door in her way, and whom I am bound to see once more before I leave England."

"What are you talking of?" said Isabella, fixing her expressive eyes despondingly upon him.—"Can you think of leaving us at this moment, and trusting yourself in this condition on board a ship? Can there be any such cruel necessity to make so rash a sacrifice of yourself? Can my gentle Lady Crowbery require it of you? Will her humanity permit it? Nay, when you consider how disconsolate she will leave us, will your own?"

"Oh, thou angelic sweetness!" he exclaimed, gently taking her hand in his, "my gratitude, my duty, my destiny demand this effort, for which, if I might now expose to you all the motives, you would confess them such as I must be a monster if I shrunk from; how severe soever the separation they compel me to. And can I look upon those eyes, and see them beaming with such soft compassion on me, yet forbear

forbear to tell you what I suffer by this painful effort? No, loveliest of your sex, whom present, absent, my poor heart devotedly adores, it is in vain to counterfeit; you see, you know the violence I commit against my nature, when I suppress its feelings; you perceive I love you. What shall I say? How shall I palliate my presumption? Yet reflect with pity on my case; remember I have liv'd by sufferance in your sight; (cou'd I see and not admire you?) have by your condescension been indulg'd beyond my humble merit, with some moments of your privacy; (cou'd I converse with you, and not be charm'd?) in short, I have contemplated perfection in your mind and person, and fixt your image on my heart so deep and so indelible, that if to love you be a crime, I am unpardonably guilty."

"You are not guilty," said Isabella, looking down, and blushing as she spoke; "to me at least not guilty."

"I know," resumed Henry, "who it is the print which faces me reflects—your excellent father; I know your love, your piety, to that best of parents, and can well believe the patience you now hear me with springs

from pity ; on that therefore I build no false presumptuous hopes ; for I know the difficulties of my present situation, the distance to which it throws me, and I wou'd scorn to take advantage of your private moments for saying any thing in a whisper, which I dar'd not openly to repeat in the presence of Sir Roger Manstock himself : if then, at this instant, the fatherly eye within that frame had sight, though I might shrink from it a while, mysterious as I am compelled to be, yet in my conscience I shou'd stand acquitted, because I know myself."

A start of surprise from Isabella, and a look betokening curiosity, at this moment directed towards him, checked him from proceeding ; after a pause, he repeated—" Yes, loveliest Isabella, I know myself, and hope I shall in time be known."

Here Henry stopt ; it seemed as if the most important secret of his life was upon the verge of discovery. Isabella too was silent ; she was debating in her thoughts whether she should urge, him to explain, or repress her curiosity ; the latter seemed most honourable, and she decided for it : at last, turning towards him
with

with a look of inexpressible sweetness, she thus addressed him—" Henry (so let me call you, till I know by what addition else to accost you) I wou'd not wish to have the keeping of a secret, that might cause regret to you for having parted with it; neither is there any information wanting to convince me you are nobly born; I am certified of that by my own observation, and have long been so. Honour, and worth, and genius may emerge from low originals, but elegance and delicacy of manners are rarely natives of a coarse and rustic soil. A strange idea haunts me: shall I confide it to you? I have really thought at times, or fancy may have feign'd it, that you have a mark'd resemblance in your air and features to my beloved Lady Crowbery, as I remember her some few years ago: this may be mere imagination; but I have humour'd myself in it the rather, because it helps me naturally to account for certain situations I have seen her in with you, which else might seem at variance with her strict reserve and delicacy of conduct: I can almost persuade myself you are after some manner related to her; at least these have been my idle reveries; but never did one

syllable to that effect escape my lips till now; I am not quite so fond of tatling as our good dame. And now, moreover, I recollect amongst the motives you enumerated for leaving us, you mention'd duty: be it so! we must conform ourselves to duty; but let me hope that we shall meet again."

"And do you wish it?" said he, looking tenderly upon her.—"Do I wish it?" she repeated.—"Oh Henry! Henry! if that's a question with you, where is your intelligence?"—Here the tears stopt her, and she leant her forehead on his shoulder, covering her face with her handkerchief.—"Heaven guard your life!" she cried; "may no female dæmon ever more attempt it! Horrid creature! shameless abandon'd being! what phrenzy cou'd possess her! Come not in her way; oh Henry, I conjure you; never look upon her more; I cou'd not bear the sight of her; I blush to think that I have ever convers'd with such a woman. But you, thank Heaven, had virtue to resist her, and virtue sure, without a blush, may give the hand to virtue."

This said, she took his hand. The manner of the action stamped it with the seal of modesty.

deftly, and modestly it was received, though love was the inspirer: it was the silent contract of their hearts, pledged with the tender interchange of fighs and looks, that bade farewell, and vowed unalterable constancy: again she pressed his hand—"And are you now convinc'd," she asked, "how anxiously I shall wish for your return? Yes, Henry, I'm free to own, my hopes, my happiness, my heart goes with you."

Oh! ecstasies how pure! moments how precious! 'tis now, O love, that virtue's self may welcome thee without reserve or coyness; composed of these chaste qualities, honour may lodge thee in his heart's best core; *yea, in his heart of heart*; the moral hand may paint, the modest eye peruse thee in this attitude; come ever thus, thou best and worst of deities, or dwell not with us long upon the scene! this will not raise a blush; Heaven warrants these endearments, and nature in this instance borrows no excuse from sophistry to palliate her propensities.

And now the tender conference closed: a servant of Lady Crowbery galloped past the window to announce her approach: Isabella

saw the signal, and slowly rose from her seat; she paused awhile, and it seemed as if something was in her mind to say, which she could wish to give utterance to, but it died away in a sigh. Henry pressed her hand to his lips in silence, and they parted.

END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

BOOK

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

An Old Man's Prattle in a wintry Night.

AS the state of society becomes more refined, eccentricity of character wears away ; a writer therefore of the present age, who aims to give amusing pictures of the humours of the times, finds nature less favourable to him in that respect than she was to those who resorted to her for the like purposes a century or two ago. This cannot be denied ; but nature still is inexhaustible, and there is no need to emigrate from her domain in search of novelty and entertainment.

Originality of humour, or as it is more commonly called, a new character, in play or novel, is the writer's first aim, as it is sure to be the first in request by every spectator and critic, and the chief test by which his genius will be tried ; but when we use the term originality as applied to the human character, we cannot be understood to mean a new creature, a being

ing formed by fancy, and not to be found in nature, but simply a close copy, a happy likeness, of some striking character, whose peculiarities have a strong effect, either in the moral or the humour of our composition. The old drama abounds with personages of this sort, and as the moulds in which they were cast are now destroyed by time, we gaze upon them with surprise and delight, regarding them as non-descripts, or creatures of a separate species, though, at the time of their production, they were doubtless sketched from nature; and it is possible that the authors of that æra were not more applauded for their originality, than we of the present time are by our contemporaries. When the critics therefore cry against the stage as fallen off in its spirit from the old masters, and seem to think we ought to exhibit as much novelty, and produce as much surprise by living characters, as they do by raising the dead, who are out of memory and forgotten, they require of us a power, which, though the witch of Endor had, no modern poet now can boast; hence it follows, that some amongst us, who are indignant of reproach, however unreasonable, being hurried upon rash attempts, either spend their talents

in copying after copies, whilst they aim to paint the manners as they were in times past, or endeavouring to create the same surprise by modern novelties, find themselves carried out of nature and probability into the visions of extravagance and romance. This in its consequence brings disgrace upon the stage, by reducing comedy into farce, and farce into puppet-shew and pantomime : the novelist, in the mean time, breaking loose from society, runs wild into forests and deserts, in search of caves and uninhabited castles, where, forgetting every law of nature, and even every feature of the human countenance, he paints men and women such as never were in existence, and then, amidst the shades of night and horror, rattles his chains, and conjures up his ghosts, till having frightened his readers out of their senses, he vainly supposes he has charmed them into applauses.

But the evil does not stop here ; for as a man, who runs mad about the streets, will be followed by a mob, in like manner the rhodomontade of the novel is copied by the nonsense of the opera ; and whilst ghosts glide over the stage, thunders roll, and towers tumble, to the amusement of the galleries, the carpenter
plays

plays off his machinery to the roar of applauding crowds, and the author, if he has any feeling for the dignity of his profession, blushes at his triumphs, when he reflects that they are founded on the disgrace of the theatre.

Let the author then beware how he is piqued into absurdities by his own vanity, or the false taste of the public; if the genius that God has given him, and the matter that nature supplies him with, will not serve the purpose, let him drop the undertaking. If his imagination can frame incidents, combine them well, and weave them naturally into a pleasing fable, he has gained his point; but an over-anxiety to produce some striking novelty will most likely end in producing some striking absurdity. All ranks of life are open to his choice, and he has a right to select the strongest humours he can find; but if he does not find what suits his purpose in nature, he has no excuse for going out of it, whilst he professes to be a delineator of the living manners: fancy may ramble as she likes, if she avowedly beats about for imaginary beings; but if she produces her own creations, and calls them men and women, or paints characters out of date, and passes them upon us for contemporaries,

temporaries, she does more than she has fair warrant and authority to do.

What I have here said of character is applicable to incident: the writers of fiction are generally actuated by so strong a passion for the marvellous, that they seem to throw every thing off the hinges, merely to alarm us with the din and clatter they make. Of all wretched expedients, which barren genius can resort to, the abrupt introduction of casualties is one of the meanest; in the novels of the present day, we encounter them at every turn, yet they never impose upon credulity; for when the sick heroine at death's door threatens us with an exit, we are convinced she does not mean to favour us with the performance of it. Surely there is no occasion for all this; neither is the impression very pleasing which it conveys,

If that originality of character, which we have been speaking of, is now become hardly attainable, discrimination is yet within reach; and by a happy contrast of leading characters, although they shall not be really new, yet all the best effects of novelty may be obtained by an alternate play on each other's humours, by the means of which very comic and amusing
situations

situations may be struck out. Amongst our countrymen, the great masters of contrast in our own day are Fielding and Sterne: Square and Thwackum, Western and his sister, the father and the uncle of Tristram Shandy, are admirable instances: Shakspeare had it from nature, Jonson caught it from Aristophanes; Socrates and the Clown Strepsiades, in the comedy of *The Clouds*, is, perhaps, the most brilliant contrast of comic humour in the now-existing records of the stage, ancient or modern.

Let me suppose I am now speaking to a young author, sitting down for the first time to his maiden work. The first thing necessary is to understand himself, the next, to know the age, in which he writes: when his nerves are fortified with a proper confidence in his own powers, let that confidence be tempered with all the respect, which is due to people of an enlightened understanding, who are to be his examiners and judges. It is a very sacred correspondence, that takes place between the mind of the author and the mind of the reader; it is not like the slight and casual intercourse we hold with our familiars and acquaintance, where any prattle serves to fill

fill up a few social minutes, and set the table in a roar; what we commit to our readers has no apology from hurry and inattention; it is the result of thought well digested, of sentiments by which we must stand or fall in reputation, of principles for which we must be responsible to our contemporaries and to posterity.

In the degree of entertainment our productions may have the fortune to afford, our expectations may be pardonably mistaken; but in what offends good morals, or sins against the truth of nature, we err without excuse; self-love cannot blind us in these respects, because it is not a matter of talents, but of rectitude and common sense. We talk of critics as of men set apart on purpose to annoy and censure us; whereas every reader is a critic, and publishes his opinion of us wherever he goes; we ourselves are critics in our turn, and what we complain of in our own persons we do to others; and though few think it worth their while to publish their criticisms, let it be remembered that some men's voices circulate further than other men's publications.

Let us, therefore, who write, weigh well the duty of the task we engage in, and let the
puerile

puerile practice of invoking the mercy of our readers be no more thought of, for, generally speaking, we are entitled to no more mercy than liberal-minded men will give us without our begging for it: I am aware of some exceptions, and am, I hope, as sensitive towards such cases as I ought to be; but I am now speaking generally of authors, who write for fame, and not for bread. If these had all the diffidence they affect to have, how came it not to stand in their way when they resorted to the press? And why this terror of the critics? An author cannot be harmed by a bad critic; and why should he be afraid of being benefitted by a good one?

CHAPTER. II.

The best Friends must part.

WE closed our last book with the parting of Henry and Isabella, in one of those situations which we would rather refer to the reader's imagination than aim to describe. Happily for him, his friendly hostess gave no interruption to his meditations, nor did they wander

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wander from their beloved object, till the sound of Lady Crowbery's wheels called him out to meet her. The chaise was stopt at the gate of the cottage-garden, and her attendant got out by her lady's order, and stepped aside, whilst Zachary and the nurse, who occupied a hackney carriage, halted in the rear. When Henry's conversation with his mother was over, and they had parted, he engaged the driver of Zachary's chaise to take him back to Crowbery on his return, which was accordingly done, and he once more found himself in the hospitable cottage with his friend Ezekiel.

To him he purposed to dedicate the remainder of that day, and the next morning to join the ship, according to the notice he had received from Captain Cary. Upon his arrival, he found that Blachford had breathed his last, and Susan May, with her infant, had taken possession of his quarters at the cottage; he therefore determined upon going on that evening to the port, and to wait no longer than till a chaise could be brought from the neighbouring post town. When he had past some time with Susan and honest Daw, in discoursing on their affairs, and had contrived to satisfy their

anxiety about his wound, with as little violence to truth as the suppression of Miss Claypole's name would admit of, a tap at the door announced a visitor, when young Tom Weevil presented himself, clad in his best apparel, carrying a wallet or knapsack at the end of a crooked stick upon his shoulder, with a cut-lafs slung in a buff belt round his waste.

The preacher, seeing an armed man enter his house, started from his seat, and marching up to him with an intrepid air, cried out, "What ailest thou, Thomas Weevil, that thou hast armed thyself in this fashion? speak, is it peace, Jehu?"—"With your leave, Doctor Daw," replied the young miller, "my business is with the gentleman there, and not with you."—"Render up your purpose to my ears, Thomas Weevil," repeated Ezekiel, "for thou shalt not pass me to approach my guest, until thou hast answered to my question; Is it peace?"—"I know not what you mean by your question," quoth Tom, "for be it peace or be it war, all's one to me, seeing that I am come to tender my services to Mr. Henry, who, I understand, is going over sea to foreign countries; and as I bear, do you see, in grateful mind, that he has sav'd my life, I think it but
just

just and right to risque it in his service; and so I am here ready to follow him to the world's end; that's all, Master Zekiel, I have to say."

"And thou hast said well, friend Thomas," quoth Ezekiel, "therefore pass in peace, and make thyself welcome with a cup of my best ale, which I will forthwith administer unto thee." So saying, the good man went out, on *hospitable thoughts intent*.

At the same time old Weevil made his appearance, and repeated to Henry the same tender, in nearly the same terms, adding, that he had given his free consent to Tom's departure, for, God be thank'd, he had sons enough left to keep the mill going the whilst. "Tom," said he, "has play'd a little loose to be sure, but he has seen his error, and that is every thing. He is a good lad in the main, and has a grateful heart." Here Ezekiel came to them, bearing in his hand a lusty pitcher, and saluting the miller with a friendly nod, set it down on the tressel-board, invitingly full and frothing.

Henry now, having given his hand to the father first, and afterwards to the son, expressed himself very sensibly affected by the offer they had
made

made him. He was going out, he told them, with a gallant captain, in a ship of war, who might possibly fall in with an enemy before he found his port—"and who can tell," said he, "where an unlucky shot may glance? I shou'd be sorry therefore to expose my friend Tom to broken bones, tho' I know him to be a brave fellow." To this Tom replied, that he despis'd danger in his service; that he was ready to share his fortune by sea and by land; that he had got his father's leave, and had a longing desire to see the world; in short, that it wou'd break his heart if Henry wou'd not permit him to go with him. This was again seconded by old Weevil, when Ezekiel, rising up, and putting himself into his accustomed posture, took up his parable as follows:—"Thy zeal, young man, to share the fortune of him, who, under Providence, was the preserver of thy life, indicates a grateful mind, and I commend thee therefore; and thou, son Henry, must no longer oppose the laudable desire, which this youth hath express'd, of devoting himself to thy service, seeing it is no less a part of generosity, in some cases, to receive an obligation, than to bestow one: it sufficeth that thou hast ingenuously forewarn'd Thomas

Weevil

Weevil of the dangers he may chance to incur in the course of thy peregrination. And verily I am myself at this moment in no small strait, having fully purposed not to suffer thee to depart alone, but to bear thee company in thy travels in pure affection of heart, knowing thee to be of a bold adventurous spirit, which pusheth thee into dangers; these, if by counsel and experience I cou'd not avert, I might at least have shar'd, being resolute to go with thee, if need requir'd, even unto death. But now behold the corpse of Mr. Blachford lieth, yet unburied, and having been the happy means of turning him from the error of his ways, can I fail to attend his body to the grave, and not be present to put up a prayer for the repose of his soul? And lo! here is the damsel also, who hath suffer'd violence by him, and whose heart now faileth her through fear of slander, needeth one to console her and support: who then but myself, the friend of her mother the widow, and witness to the confession of her seducer, who was once a son of Belial, excusing her and accusing himself, is so fitted to that labour of love? These, not to mention the care of her worldly affairs, which lieth on me, are amongst the calls by which

the trouble of my heart is enlarged, when I reflect that I must suffer thee, son Henry, to depart alone ; yet not alone, if so be this friendly youth, whose grateful tender of himself I do exhort thee to accept, shall be thy companion by the way. And now seeing the hour of thy departure approacheth, and the evening draweth on, I must be brief, as is my manner of speech, saying only those things which it were a shame to omit, and praying the Lord of all mercy to preserve thee in all thy goings, beseeching him to dispose thy heart to continue stedfast in his fear and love amidst all the temptations of this sinful world, and in his good time to return thee and this thy companion safe and unhurt to your rejoicing friends."

The good man having concluded his harangue, lifted the pitcher to his lips, and drank a farewell to his parting guests, for Henry's chaise had now come up to the door. Tom Weevil, whose offer was accepted joyfully, bestirred himself in stowing Henry's baggage and his own upon the carriage ; and now the moment came when our hero, taking Ezekiel's hands in his, tenderly addressed him in these words—"Farewell, my worthy friend ; where-
ever

ever Providence disposes of me, and whatever may befall me, whilst I retain life and memory, your kindness, benevolence, charities, and virtues will be register'd in my heart."—Then turning to Susan, who stood mute with sorrow at seeing him prepare to depart, her cheeks bathed with tears, he took her in his arms, and, after a tender embrace, recommended her to the protection of Ezekiel, saying—"I leave you to the care of this good man, who will also stand in my place as guardian of your infant till I return to you again: he knows the purport of Mr. Blachford's will, and will take the measures on my part as executor, which a prudent care of your interest will prescribe: I need not caution you to observe a proper attention to the amiable young lady, in whose service you will now no longer remain. To this your best of benefactors you owe the duty of a daughter, and you will not fail to pay it, for to his pious exhortations it is owing, that the father of your child was brought to a sense of the injuries he had done you, and induced to atone for them; at the same time take notice, that this excellent creature suffer'd not one shilling of the deceas'd to adhere to his fingers, notwithstanding every offer which, to my know-

ledge,

ledge, was repeatedly press'd upon him by that penitent on his death-bed."—"This," said he, addressing himself to old Weevil, who was standing by, "is a noble instance of disinterestedness, and merits the applause of every honest man."—Then giving his hand to Weevil, he bade him farewell, promising him to take care of his son; and hastening out of doors, stepped into his chaise, followed by Tom, and was off as fast as four nimble horses and two dashing drivers could transport him.

In the mean time silence reigned in the cottage: Ezekiel committed himself to his wicker-chair, and remained in pensive meditation: Susan seated herself by his side, and as he rested his hand upon the arm of his chair, pressed her lips upon it, and bathed it in her tears: old Weevil felt an aching in his throat, and applied himself to the pitcher without uttering a word. Ezekiel seeing this, roused himself in his seat, and cried, though in a faltering voice, "Courage, neighbour, we have only parted from our friends, we have not lost them."—"No, no," cried the miller, as he took the pitcher from his lips; "to be sure, as you say, we have not to mourn over the loss of them, but somehow or other it makes one feel a little queer;

queer; for, as nobody can be sure of life for an hour to come, parting methinks is, as I may say, like taking leave for ever."—"Heaven, in its mercy, forbid that," cried Susan, and burst aloud into an agony of grief.—"Child, child," said Ezekiel, "moderate thy wailing; it becometh not us to give way to inordinate grief: what hast thou lost which I have not lost, and dost thou see me give way to this unseemly weakness? why dost thou not take example by me? thou seest, damsel, that I am firm and unshaken." Here his voice began to quiver, and he seemed fighting against something that rose in his throat, and would not suffer him to proceed. "I know," cried Susan, "we should not anticipate affliction; but when a dreadful image is presented to my imagination, how can I forbear to feel a horror at the thoughts of losing such a friend for ever? Think only what he has been to me; think what he is, how kind, how gentle, how benevolent! Call to mind his virtues, his sufferings, his humility"—Ezekiel groaned.—"What poverty, what persecution he has endured."—Ezekiel marked his assent with a motion of his head, muttering to himself, with a sigh, that it was true. "You, I am sure,"

said Susan, turning to Weevil, "have cause to bless him, you can witness to his good deeds, and you can also tell how he was rewarded for them; but let the dead sleep in peace; there are some still living whose malice never sleeps, there is no end to their attempts against his life, wicked wretches! it is to some of them he owes that wound, which he wou'd make us believe is accident, because he's all forgiveness: but I believe some villain has beset him: Heavens! what must that man's heart be made of?"—"Mill-stones," said Ezekiel.—"I wish I had them between mine," quoth Weevil, "by the Lord Harry I wou'd squeeze them."—"I know whereabouts they are," rejoined Susan, "and what their spite springs from; and now, my dear Mr. Daw, can you wonder I am afflicted, when such is their diabolical malice, that perhaps even now they have a plot upon his life, and are lying in wait to destroy him."—These words seizing the brain of Ezekiel, he sprung upon his legs, and with an asseveration not far short of an oath, declared he would that instant go forth and defend him. Susan, who saw the phrensy, cried out to Weevil to stop him. "Are you beside yourself, friend Daw," said the miller, "to think of overtaking

overtaking four post-horses with one pair of legs? what the plague, is not my son Tom there to guard him, and didn't they set off helter skelter as if the devil drove them? why by this time they are half way to the sea-side, and who shou'd stop them? Our friend Susan does but speak as all women do when they are in a fright; and I thought you was too much a man to be startled by what they say."—"I believe," replied Daw, resuming his dignity, "I am as much of a man as my neighbours, and not less of a friend to my fellow-creatures than I ought to be. I am not apt to be idle when the wicked are a-foot, and innocence is in danger. However, I do recollect that they went off with speed, and that there is little likelihood I can with all my exertions overtake them, tho' I hold myself no mean pedestrian, and yield to no one in the race on foot. Howbeit, I decline the contest against such odds; but no sooner shall to-morrow's sun rise than I will rise with him, and step over to the port to see if all be well; and, if aught be wanting, to stand forth in their service and defence."

"Wilt thou," cried Weevil, "then I am with thee, and will whip thee over in my

jockey-cart in a trice, you'll go as easy as if you was in your own wicker-chair. I will be here at thy door by the first peep of day. What say'st thou, is't agreed?"—"Agreed!" cried Ezekiel, "but hold, what day in the week will to-morrow be?"—"Thursday," said the miller.—"I protest that is lucky," replied the preacher; "for had it been the Lord's day I could not have gone with thee."—"Then give me hold of your hand," quoth Weevil, "for damn me if thou art not as good a heart as lives, and if ever I have slipt out any thing in the way of joke to offend thee, I am heartily sorry for it, and I ask thy pardon."—"Enough," quoth Daw, "and more than enough, friend Thomas; for I cou'd have credited thy good-will without an oath; however drink, and let us empty the pitcher."

CHAPTER III.

Our Hero goes out to Sea.

PUNCTUAL to his appointment, Miller Weevil presented himself, by break of day, at the door of Ezekiel's castle, where, having seated the apostle by his side, directly over the
axletree

axletree of a vehicle, which, if it had been constructed professedly as an instrument of torture, might have done credit to the ingenious cruelty of its inventor, he set forward on a round trot, jolting him over ruts and rocks with a merciless indifference the straightest way to his point, till they came in view of the sea, with the frigate riding at anchor. Ezekiel, who now saw a period to the persecution he had endured for two long hours, took courage, and being just then in a sandy pass, availed himself of the first moment he could venture to put his tongue to any use, having wisely kept it still whilst his teeth were in motion: the scene was magnificent; the sun, which was flaming in their rear, threw a gleam of splendour over the shore, the ship and the expanse of waters, that terminated the prospect. Objects like these could not fail to carry up Ezekiel's thoughts to the Creator of all things; in his soul Devotion, eagle-winged, sat ever ready to catch the signal for soaring in its flight towards Heaven; accordingly he began, in a lofty cadence, to rehearse that portion of the 107th psalm, which begins "*They that go down to the sea in ships.*" His charioteer in the meanwhile, struck with the awful strain, respectfully

slackened his pace and listened in silence, pondering the fate of his son, then floating on the surface of that tremendous ocean, in the mercy of Him "*at whose word the stormy wind ariseth.*"

When Ezekiel ceased his recitation, Weevil observed that the words were very fine, though he was pretty sure he had heard them before. "I believe thou hast," quoth Ezekiel, "if thou didst ever hear the psalms."—"If so," said he, "I wish you wou'd double down the leaf for son Thomas, for I think every man who goes to sea shou'd have the fear of God before his eyes."—"And whither shou'd any man go without it?" said Ezekiel; and immediately struck into that enraptured passage of the same sublime minstrel, "*Whither shall I go then from thy spirit,*" &c.

This again drew the profoundest attention from Weevil, who, at the conclusion, expressed himself very highly delighted with what he had heard, observing, that he firmly believed it all, and that no man could commit a bad action safely, for that God's eyes were every where; "and I make no doubt," added he, "but that villain Bowsey, tho' he has got out of our reach, will fall into the hands of justice sooner or later, and pay sauce for his wickedness in the end;
and

and as I hold him to be a murderer all one as if Tom had died under his hand, I don't despair of seeing him brought to the gallows in God's good time."—"Neighbour Weevil," replied Ezekiel, "it is not in the death, but in the conversion of a sinner that our God delighteth, and thou, taking pattern from his mercy, shouldst abstain from vengeance, seeing it belongeth not to thee, but to him alone. Forbear, therefore, to wish for the punishment of that runnagate, wish rather for his repentance. Do all things, my friend, in love and charity to all men; give thy heart to him that deserves it, thy help to all that stand in need of it. Remember that the law tries our actions, but God judges our thoughts. There is a rule, short, easy, equitable—*Do as you would be done by*, and you cannot do wrong."—"Why that's exactly the rule I follow," said the miller; "if a man does me a good turn, I requite him with one as good; if he does me an ill one, I pay him in his own coin; and if he robs and plunders me, like that villain Bowsey, I wish to see him hang'd; that's my way, and I believe it's very natural."

Weevil was not famous for drawing right conclusions, and Ezekiel would hardly have

failed to convince him of it, had not he just then turned into his inn-yard, under the sign of the ship, where he was instantly accosted by his son Thomas, who had just come off from the ship to procure some things that Henry had occasion for : one of the frigate's boats was waiting for him, and his job would be dispatched in half an hour, when he would go with them on board, where Henry was. This interval Weevil proposed to fill up with a good breakfast ; for whatever his companion might think of the matter, he at least recollected that he had come away from home fasting.

There was a fellow in the kitchen, belonging to the boat, who called himself the captain's cockswain, who made himself known to our travellers upon hearing them say they were going on board ; he had been taking leave of a nymph of the shore, who went by the dubious title of his wife, and indeed it may well be questioned if that honourable and happy title was more than nominal ; she was however in tears, and Jack was comforting her and himself with a glass of brandy, whilst he repeated to her in a lamentable tone his parting vows, interlarding them with a continual re-
petition

petition of "Only be true to me, Poll;" and clenching his promises of reciprocal fidelity with oaths of so peculiar a sort, as made Ezekiel stare with astonishment, though he hardly knew what interpretation to put upon them. At last, when the fellow had pretty well disposed of every particle about himself to some devil or other, to hold in pledge for his constancy to his beloved mate, Ezekiel, though in close action at that moment with the salted buttock of an ox, laid down his knife and fork, and began to take the swearer to task. "Friend," said Ezekiel, "thou hast talk'd in so loud a tone that thou hast made us hearers of thy conversation whether we wou'd or not; I perceive with regret that in the midst of thy affliction at parting from thy spouse, thou hast exhorted her to constancy frequently, and in such a manner as argues a suspicion of her fidelity to thee in thine absence: what cause thou hast to hold in doubt the virtue of the wife of thy bosom I cannot tell, as thou hast stated no actual charge against her; but I shou'd hope the young woman hath not enter'd into the holy state of wedlock without weighing and perpending the duties of a wife, and also what a heinous sin it is to violate the nuptial bed: if she knoweth
this,

this, what need is there for thy so frequent repetitions on a case so clear? if she knoweth it not, I am here ready to instruct her in her matrimonial offices to the best of my abilities."

"Are you so? you be damn'd," cried the sailor, eyeing him from head to foot with the most sovereign contempt; "I'll tell you what, brother, 'twill be the worst job you ever took in hand in your life. You, indeed! you, with those lantern jaws, pretend to talk to my Poll; you, with that lank carcase, for all the world like the purser's shirt upon a hand-spike." And now the lady, no less irritated than her spokesman, joined her treble to the base, overwhelming poor Ezekiel with a torrent of words not the most courtly, in a key not the most harmonious, whilst he stood staring with astonishment on them both, yielding however no one inch of ground from the post he had taken, nor from the upright attitude in which he stood, conscious of having given no offence, save that his zeal had innocently intruded a kind offer where it was not called for. But soon the din became general; for Weevil, the miller, had now turned out on the part of his friend, whilst the landlady, who exerted her voice for peace and silence, roared louder, and
6 with

with more fury than the parties themselves, who were vociferous enough in the controversy without her help. When this confusion was at the height, and the sailor, now roused, like the lion, with his own roar, was become ferocious, thundering out his oaths by whole broadsides at a volley, a stripling youth, or rather boy, in the uniform of a midshipman, stepping up to him, and catching hold of a button of his jacket, cried out in a shrill emasculate voice, —“ What’s here to do with you, rascal ? hold your jaw and jump aboard, you lubber, or I’ll make you change your doxy for the gunner’s daughter.”

Silence instantly ensued.—“ Aye, aye, Sir !” cried the sailor, gave a shrug, pulled up his trousers, and was off like a shot.

The youngster asked the landlady if the fellow had left any thing unpaid ; and being told there was nothing on the score but a shilling for the brandy he and the lady had been drinking, he immediately discharged it, intimating to the aforesaid lady, that no more women would be admitted on board, as the frigate would weigh with the next tide.

Ezekiel contemplated this instance of discipline with surprise and admiration : the
boyish

boyish age and person of the officer carried so little authority in appearance, that he could scarce account for the immediate effect it took upon the boisterous spirit of the sailor, and the obedience it produced.—“ Truly, young gentleman,” he said, “ there must be admirable order on board your ship, when an unruly nature can be so readily controul’d by a gentle one.”—“ I believe, Sir,” said the boy, “ we are as well off in that respect as our neighbours; Captain Cary supports his officers, and I fancy that’s the surest way to keep the men in order.”—Ezekiel then enquired after his friend on board, said that he had come for the purpose of paying him a short visit before he sailed, and civilly requested permission to be passed to the ship in his boat.—“ Most readily,” said this young commander; “ I am only waiting for a man who is on shore on that gentleman’s business, and I shall be off directly.” At that instant Tom Weevil entered the kitchen, and the miller having paid the reckoning, Ezekiel with the father and son, under conduct of their warlike leader, proceeded to the beach, where the boat was manned and waiting. There was a heavy swell set in by the opposition of wind and tide, and further
out.

out a bar, on which the sea broke in a manner not a little formidable to a landsman's eyes: the frigate was at anchor about two miles without this bar; Ezekiel and old Weevil were placed in the stern-sheets, Tom took his post at the bow, and the noisy fellow, now in office as cockswain, took his seat in the steerage, as perfectly under command of his beardless officer, as if the admiral of the fleet had been on board the boat. If Ezekiel was struck with surprize at the authority of the youngster on shore, he was still more so with his address and skill in manœuvring the boat through a sea, which he conceived was every instant about to overwhelm them in the waves. The miller, who was as much a novice in navigation as the preacher, exhibited strong symptoms of alarm, jumping up once or twice in the boat, for which he was very properly reprimanded by the youngster, who ridiculed his fears, telling him if he was afraid of being swamp'd, he went the very way to bring it about. Ezekiel, on the contrary, sat still and kept a steady countenance, not that he did not think he was at the last crisis of his fate, but because he possessed a mind tranquillized by religion, and perfectly resigned to that all-direc-

recting

recting Being, to whom his mental ejaculations were then silently addressed. When they had struggled for some time on the bar, with lusty sinews and *hearts of controversy*, the young officer giving his orders with perfect firmness and precision, and all voices were hushed, but the shrill small pipe of a child, he cried to the cockswain—"Mind your helm and be damn'd to you! Steer steady; now, lads, give way all, and we are clear."—The energy was instantaneous; what cannot British sailors do? the boat was driven through the waves, the bar was passed, and they found themselves at once in deep water and a smoother sea: the little midshipman now bade them step the mast and hoist the sail; they shot before the wind, and quickly were along-side of the frigate. The humanity of this youngster gave orders for taking care of Ezekiel and old Weevil, as they awkwardly scrambled up the side; a lieutenant stood upon the gunwhale, giving orders about some fresh beef and other stores they had brought off in the cutter; and Ezekiel had another call upon his wonder and surprize, when he heard this lieutenant say to the young officer of the boat—"You have had a good tuzzle on the bar, Lord Frederick."—"So, so,"

so," replied Lord Frederick, and immediately taking off his hat, whilst he addressed his superior officer, informed him that these two gentlemen wished to speak to Mr. Fitzhenry. The answer was, that he was then in the cabin under the surgeon's hands, but if the gentlemen's business was urgent, he would direct them to be shewn the way to him. Ezekiel expressing a desire to be instantly admitted to his friend, was put under the guidance of a marine, whilst old Weevil went aside with Tom to his quarters.

When Ezekiel entered the cabin, he found Henry with his arm stripped, and the surgeon cleaning his wound; a kind salutation was all these friends could interchange in their present circumstances.—“ This gentleman,” said Henry, “ who is the surgeon of the ship, is so kind to take in hand this paltry scratch, and I assure you, he gives a very handsome testimony to our good dame's performances.”—“ A scratch, do you call it?” cried Ezekiel, knitting his brow, “ it is a perilous stab! I protest I did not think by your account it had been any thing like this:”—then addressing himself to the surgeon, he added,—“ I pray you, learned Sir, what is your opinion of this

ugly gash?"—"My opinion is," cried the surgeon, "that had it not been in the direction where fortunately it is, it might have been an ugly gash indeed; but as it is, I think it will be well in a few more dressings."—This he said without looking at Ezekiel, being then employed in applying a compress to the wound before he bound it up: having done this, he looked round for the speaker, whom he no sooner set eyes on, than he said, "Is it you, Mr. Daw? I am very glad to see you."—Ezekiel stared upon him for a moment, then marching up to him, and taking him cordially by the hand, exclaimed,—“As I live, it is my old friend and favourite, Billy Williams: never trust me, but I rejoice to see thee in the land of the living, Mr. Williams; heartily I rejoice at thy well-doing, for I have much bewail'd thy sudden disappearance from amongst us, esteeming thee very truly for thy towardsly disposition and good qualities, no less than for thy talents. If I mistake not, it is now going on to two years since you quitted neighbour Cawdle, and we knew not whither you went?”—This satisfied Henry's curiosity so far, and as they proceeded in their conversation, Williams filled up the interval with an
account

account of himself in various ships to the present time, when having done his business with Henry, and answered all Ezekiel's enquiries, he respectfully took his leave and retired. And now our hero and his friend being left to themselves, had a conference of at least half an hour without interruption, when Captain Cary entered the cabin, who very kindly welcomed Ezekiel upon Henry's introduction of him : he lamented he could not ask him to dinner, as they were then weighing anchor, and should be out to sea. "We must think therefore," said he, "how to get you on shore:" and the first lieutenant then entering the cabin, he desired him to hail the tender along-side of them, and ask the loan of their boat to set Ezekiel and his friend Weevil on shore. They now adjourned to the quarter-deck, whilst Ezekiel's attention was deeply engaged with the exertions of the men at the capstan, where, for the time they are at work, they enjoy a kind of temporary saturnalia, venting their sea jokes without restraint, in a most ridiculous stile. All was new to Ezekiel, but the heavy moment of parting from Henry hung upon his heart, and now the tender's boat was hauled along side ; the frigate swung with the tide ; the

sails

sails were hoisting, the boatswain plied his whistle, the men swarmed upon the yards, the officers roared through their trumpets, Weevil was already in the boat, Ezekiel cast a parting look at Henry, threw his arms about his neck, sighed out a farewell; recommended him to Providence, and committed himself to the boat.

CHAPTER IV.

*A certain interested Gentleman meets
with a Rebuff.*

THE tender's boatmen hawled off from the ship a few lengths, and then laid on their oars, and cheered the frigate, who now began to feel her sails and make way through the water: this roused Ezekiel from his torpor, and instantly his ears were assailed by three repeated cheers, in a much louder key from the whole crew of the tender, who had manned ship in compliment to Captain Cary: the frigate's crew returned the inspiring compliment, and then presenting her stern to the
tear-

tear-full eyes of Ezekiel, she glided majestically over the waves, scarce deigning them a curtsy as they sunk beneath her keel, conscious, as it should seem, that she was worthy to assert the empire of the flag which she displayed.

“Hurrah! my hearts,” cried the man in the steerage, the boat cut through the water.—“There she goes,” looking at the frigate, said one of the fellows at his oar.—“Damn me, but I wish I was in her,” repeated a second.—“Have you then a friend,” said Ezekiel, “on board that ship, whom you regret to part from? and is your heart agoniz’d with grief like mine?”—“Grief indeed!” cried the fellow, in a surly tone; “grief never came near my heart since I had one: I wish myself in her because I think she has a fighting captain on board, and there’ll be something to be got to make merry with on shore: but belike you are tender-hearted, and take on because your friend is gone to sea; if that be the case, do you mind me, do as I do, when I part from my wife, swab the spray out of your glims, and think no more about it.”—“I cannot be sure that I clearly understand thee, friend,” replied Ezekiel, “but I presume it
makes

makes to the benefit of thy country, that thou art void of feeling."

As this did not reach the understanding of the tar, it produced no answer, and whatever want of feeling in Ezekiel's sense of it there might be in those he had embarked with, there was such strength and alacrity, that our passengers soon found themselves safely landed on their native soil. A can of grog to the crew, and a slight refreshment for Weevil and Ezekiel, to revive languid nature, filled up the time, whilst the miller's cart was getting ready, which at length safely landed our travellers at Ezekiel's door, and not without many of those jars and jumbles emblematic of the troubles inseparably attendant on our passage through life.

Whilst Henry was now wafted into the ocean, and whilst the land he had left was sinking in the horizon of his prospect, the tender heart of his beloved Isabella had directed many a sigh to attend him over the watery waste. Lady Crowbery had arrived at Manstock House, less exhausted with her first stage than could reasonably be expected: Sir Roger, Isabella, Zachary Cawdle, every soul male and female in the family, were in motion to attend upon her, nor did the reverend

rend Mr. Claypole fail to be amongst the forwardest to exhibit his devoirs: Fanny, meanwhile, remained in sullen solitude at the vicarage, her mind experiencing the various torments slighted passion is exposed to. Her secret was entombed in Isabella's breast; in that of Goody May it had a more precarious tenure; yet for the present she adhered to the injunctions she had received, and held her tongue. Lady Crowbery had remarked the condition of Henry's arm, but had taken up with the slight account he had given of it, the rather because she perceived he had a ready use of it. Little, however, was said upon the subject whilst the family were about her, and Isabella did not think it necessary to speak of the interview she had had at the dame's.

When dinner was over, and Lady Crowbery's spirits seemed recruited by her repast and the company of her friends, an opportunity was taken by Sir Roger to introduce a subject, which he knew his friend Mr. Claypole to have much at heart, and which he opened, by enquiring if she had filled up Mr. Ratcliffe's vacancy. Upon her replying, that it was yet open, Sir Roger expressed his wishes in favour of his friend then present, for Clay-

pole's delicacy had not prevailed with him to retire from the hearing of his own success at first hand, of which he very naturally entertained the most sanguine expectation.—“Are you a party in these wishes of your worthy friend?” said the Lady, addressing herself to Claypole.—“I confess to your Ladyship I am,” replied he, “and should hold myself infinitely bound to you for putting me in possession of those wishes.”—“Mr. Ratcliffe was a constant resident,” resumed she, “and, perhaps, you are not aware that I shou’d stipulate with his successor to tread as nearly as possible in his steps.”—“I hope, Madam,” replied the Divine, somewhat piqued at the expression, “I shou’d not fall short of my predecessor in any part of his practice.”—“In some of his doctrines, I believe, you differ, Mr. Claypole, if I have been rightly inform’d.”—“As how, Madam, I beseech you,” reiterated the reverend gentleman, with eagerness, “in what one doctrine, fitting for Mr. Ratcliffe to hold, have I been found to differ from him, or fall short? I never had my orthodoxy question’d.”—Sir Roger looked at his niece with marks of surprise, but being a man of few words, waited silently for a further explanation of this mystery.

mystery.—“ In this respect,” said the Lady, “ I conceive you differ : Mr. Ratcliffe put a value on a just and generous act; that wou’d have led him to despise the man who gave him fordid counsel, or condemn’d him for a sacrifice of interest to conscience. This, I dare say, is your doctrine in the pulpit, Mr. Claypole, for I don’t doubt your orthodoxy ; but, allow me to say, it was his also in the closet ; this he inculcated to Henry, whom he father’d, and who has nobly practis’d what he taught, by giving up the whole of Blachford’s fortune to the son of Blachford : this you condemn’d ; but this my departed friend wou’d have so decidedly approv’d of, that I take upon me to say, you differ in your doctrine ; and being employ’d in seeking out some successor, who shall, as I before said, tread as nearly as possible in the steps of that excellent and ever-lamented friend, I can only tell you, that I have not yet discover’d the person that answers to my search.”

Here the lady ceased from speaking. The persons present were Sir Roger Manstock, Isabella, and the gentleman himself, to whom the words were addressed ; of these not one seemed disposed at that time to renew the subject ; various motives kept them silent ; when

Claypole, who had probably better dispositions for taking up the conversation, but less matter to support it with than any present, suddenly retired, and left the uncle, niece, and Isabella, to comment upon it as they saw fit.

Sir Roger, who was not yet informed of the transaction alluded to by Lady Crowbery, and, to his great surprise, had heard his application answered in so different a manner from what he looked for, saw Claypole leave the room without offering a word either in support of his suit, or which might lead to an explanation of what he did not yet comprehend. Isabella alone knew the real motives of the absent gentleman for the proceeding, which Lady Crowbery resented in this manner, and at the same time foresaw the farther disappointment that was in reserve for him, when he should next have a meeting with his niece. Sir Roger, in the mean time, after some pause, requested to be informed by Lady Crowbery, how it was Mr. Claypole had been so unfortunate as to lose her good opinion? This drew from her an account of Henry's generous behaviour in the matter of Blachford's will, and of the sentiments Mr. Claypole had expressed upon that transaction, when he called upon
Henry

Henry at Crowbery. Every circumstance of this was new to the worthy Baronet, who, without hesitation, concurred in passing the highest encomiums on our hero, and concluded by saying, that he always suspected his friend Claypole to have a little more attention to the main chance, than was strictly consistent with his own way of thinking.—“Witness,” said he, “his readiness to give up me and my parish for an exchange, which, upon calculation, cou’d not have benefitted him in more than a hundred a year at most, so that, I confess to you, it put me upon computing the price at which he valued the society of an old friend, whose house and heart were ever open to him. After all, perhaps, it may be too much to require of any man, that he shou’d love me better than his money; and as for his advice to our friend Henry, which appears to you so reprehensible, recollecting, as I do, how much it was the wish of his heart to marry him to his niece Fanny, I can account for his regret at seeing such a fortune as Mr. Blachford’s slip out of his fingers.”—“Heavens!” exclaimed Lady Crowbery, forgetting herself in the moment of surprise, “had he the assurance to suppose that my Henry wou’d throw himself

away upon that flippant flirting thing Fanny Claypole? I'll venture to pronounce, his heart was never that way dispos'd; no, no, he has better notions, better taste, and better pretensions."

The Baronet, though too much a man of honour to expose what had been passing in his house, was yet unwilling to hear his intelligence so totally decried, and turning to his daughter, said, he fancied she could testify there was some truth in what he said: this appeal came rather unseasonably upon Isabella, who had taken to herself the application of some words, which Lady Crowbery had concluded with, and she simply replied, that Miss Claypole, she believed, would not have been adverse to such a proposal; but she added, incautiously enough, that she was sure no such thing could ever take place.—"Indeed!" cried her father, "are you sure of that? Upon what grounds, I beg to know, do you speak so confidently about Henry's resolutions?"—"Because," replied Isabella, and here she faltered; but truth was too familiar with her lips to be held back—"because he told me so himself."

CHAPTER V.

Let Innocence beware! Spring-guns and Man-traps are laid in these Premises!

WHEN Isabella gave this honest answer to her father's question, a light struck upon his mind, which some of our readers may think might have reached him before. Accustomed ever to behold her open brow without a cloud, and to hear her speak to him without faltering, the embarrassment that now he could not fail to discover, opened a new train of thoughts, and he instantly pressed fresh questions upon Isabella, which she had too much candour to evade. She told him how she had accidentally dropt in at dame May's that very morning, where she found Henry.—“And how came he there?” Sir Roger demanded?—“He had hurt his arm, and the good woman was dressing it.”—“And did he tell you of Mr. Claypole's proposal for his niece, and of his own rejection of her?”—“I understood,” replied Isabella, “he had an interview with Miss Claypole, which had been conclu-

sive against any further correspondence or connection."—"And how was you interested," demanded he, "to be inform'd of that?"—"I shou'd hope," replied Isabella, "that my father does not want to search into my thoughts, as suspecting they conceal what ought not to be there."—This apostrophe, and perhaps the presence of Lady Crowbery, checked for a time the curiosity of Sir Roger; Zachary also helped to turn the subject, by coming in with a medicine he had been preparing for his patient.

The reverend Mr. Claypole, who had left the room upon his rebuff from the lady patroness of Ratcliffe's living, had gone straight to the vicarage in quest of his niece: here he was greeted, not with the sight of Fanny, but of Fanny's letter, put into his hands by the old woman of the house, who informed him that the young lady had taken her departure early in the morning. This letter briefly told him, that she had for ever taken leave of a place that was rendered odious to her by the treatment she had met in it; that she made no doubt stories would be circulated disreputable to her character, but they could be nothing but the basest forgeries, which she conjured him
to

to treat with the contempt they merited; that she had discovered the young man, he thought so well of, to be half knave half fool, and, for her part, she had done with him; she added, that he had frightened her into fits by his awkwardness, in letting a knife, which she had used for cutting open the leaves of a book, run into his arm, and wound him. In conclusion, she apologized for the early hour of her departure, which prevented her from taking leave of him; but he should hear from her when she arrived in London.

Claypole's breast now boiled with indignation against Henry; he had disgraced his niece, and, which was worse, disappointed him of a valuable living; for he was too well informed, not to know that Ratcliffe had left it in a state that would bear a deal of stretching. In this temper of mind he sauntered slowly towards Sir Roger's, deeply meditating by the way: the baronet was no less eager for the meeting than he was, and having stepped out of the room when Zachary entered in, encountered him in the hall. Claypole was full charged with venom he had brooded upon by the way; "I thank you, dear and worthy Sir," said he, with counterfeited humility, "for your kind though

ineffectual intercession in my favour. Having heard a character of myself so contrary to what I expected or deserved, I hope you will not think me petulant, if I beg leave to retire to my chamber for this evening, rather than meet the eyes of a lady, which had not us'd to look so unfavourably upon me, and for whom I entertain too high a reverence and esteem, to be indifferent to her contempt of me. Perhaps, Sir, you may have thought, as Lady Crowbery does, that this young man's conduct in Blachford's business is an act of high honour, and that I was a very shabby fellow to advise him otherwise."—"I don't quite say that," replied Sir Roger gravely; "because I believe you thought of him as likely to be a part of the family; but I confess to you, the transaction, as represented to me, appears a very honourable one on his part."—"His motives must determine that," said Claypole; "it is a cheap way of doing a seemingly disinterested action, when he gains the favour of Lady Crowbery, and the good opinion of Miss Manstock." Sir Roger started. "I own," continued he, "that I did zealously press forward a marriage, in which I did not altogether wish to make so total a

sacrifice of my niece, as to marry her to absolute beggary, but recommended him to reserve some portion of Mr. Blachford's property as a maintenance: this is the mercenary advice for which I am condemn'd; but, with humble submission to Lady Crowbery, I am of opinion I was sufficiently disinterested, when I promoted a marriage even upon these terms, and which I shou'd not have listen'd to for a moment upon any, had I not been persuaded, that by taking the danger of an obscure unpromising connection on myself, I was fulfilling the duties of gratitude and friendship, by consulting the interests of my patron and benefactor, in the most essential object of his life." Here Sir Roger again made a motion expressive of agitation and surprise. "And now, Sir," added he, "if I, who have been so long honour'd with your friendship, and so much profited by your hospitality, have appeared to you as a man insensible to your bounty and my own happiness, and one who, upon mercenary motives, was reaching after a better benefice in a distant place, I hope you will now discern my motives, and acquit me of such folly, and such ingratitude, as wou'd stamp my conduct, upon any other principles

than the real ones ; for, in the first place, what cou'd I profit by the exchange, granting that Mr. Ratcliffe's living were somewhat better than my own, a fact which I have not been curious to enquire into : but be the advantage what it may, surely it wou'd not balance the difference between living upon my own establishment, and appertaining to your's ; but when I foresaw, with grief of heart, that whether this young nameless fellow married, or married not, my Fanny Claypole, my station in this family had no lasting tenure, consistently with your repose or my own, can you wonder that I caught at any hope that offer'd me an opportunity of retreating in good time, without disturbing your peace at my departure, content that you shou'd even condemn me for the measure, rather than be driven, as I now am, to open your eyes upon the real motives for it ?”

“ Mr. Claypole,” said Sir Roger, no longer able to refrain himself, “ you do indeed open my eyes, which have been in darkness ; but I must desire you will also enable them to see clearly all the danger that is before them, else, permit me to observe, that your friendship only goes the length of alarming me, but
stops

stops short where it shou'd inform me."—
"Sir Roger Manstock," replied Claypole, in a tone of much solemnity, "after the proof I have given how far my attachment has already carried me, I shou'd hope you will not suppose it likely to stop short, or shrink from any duties friendship can require of me. If this young adventurer had carried off my niece, I shou'd have held myself justified in serving you so far, and shou'd have seceded from your family in silence; for where wou'd have been the kindness or use in opening your eyes upon dangers, after you had escap'd them? You would then, perhaps, have set me down in your thoughts for a capricious, fickle minded man; but my conscience would have witness'd better things. But now that this Mr. Henry Fitzhenry, or whatever name he chuses to be call'd by, has thought fit to reject Miss Claypole, with fifteen thousand pounds to her fortune, and my honest attempt is defeated, with the sacrifice of my niece's peace and reputation, whilst he is extoll'd to the skies for his rejection both of her generous offer and Blachford's liberal bequest, what am I to think, but that he has friends in those who so highly praise him, who are too
well

well disposed to reward him for sacrificing my connection, and to ruin me in your esteem, (of which design I think you have already had some proof) for my attempt to take upon myself your danger, and defeat their wishes! And now, Sir Roger, let me make one serious condition with you in this place; consent to drop this matter for the present; Lady Crowthery is your guest for this night; separate not yourself any longer from her, I beseech you; change not, if possible, your countenance, nor abate of your good humour to either of those amiable ladies, who will wonder at your absence, if you do not suffer me to retire immediately. If any question is ask'd, why I do not attend at supper, be pleas'd to let my apology be a slight indisposition: the plea will not offend against the truth, for I am far from well." This said, he took Sir Roger's hand, tenderly pressed it in his, and hastened away.

When he found himself in his chamber, he again took out his niece's letter, and then for the first time discovered that there was a post-script over leaf, which he had overlooked in his first reading, there being no reference to it. The purport was as follows:—

"The Gentleman took up his abode last
"night

ght with Mother May, a good common body, as you will confess, if you find, upon enquiry, that the immaculate Isabella shall have given him the meeting there if she did, let Sir Roger look about him); can take upon me to assure you she is fond of him; and it is my opinion, that in spite of all her sanctified airs, she is up to any act of desperation love can drive her to. Once more I repeat,—let Sir Roger look about him.”

His postscript, so happily coinciding with his own operations already commenced, destined Claypole to set out immediately on his discoveries. His first wish was to sift Mother May; but of this he soon saw the improbability, at least of undertaking it in his own person; he therefore bent his steps to his own house, supposing he might get something from the old woman in his service, and with whom curiosity was not likely to subject him to any same suspicion. Of her he learnt no more, but that Henry had been a pretty considerable time alone with Miss Fanny, during which she never entered the room; but that just as he was going, he rung the bell with great violence, and upon her coming to it, told her,

her, that her young lady was taken suddenly ill, and charged her to be careful of her, and not leave her; that she did not then discover he was wounded, but was told it by Miss Fanny, who raved, and rambled, and took on at a piteous rate, being in strong hysterics. "As for what she talk'd about in her fit"—— said the old woman. "Tell me what she said in her fit;" quoth Claypole; "it is very material to me to know what she said, and 'tis your duty not to conceal it from me." The woman then repeated, as well as she could, such of her incoherent sallies, as she could call to mind: they were made up of various passions, breaking out in confused exclamations; sometimes of violent love, at other times of hatred and contempt as violent; some expressions she recollected full of terror for his life, and as if she had accused herself of having murdered him. "At one time," added the old woman, "I was forely afraid the poor young lady had been betray'd, and dealt dishonestly by, for she said again and again, that he had made a fool of her, and was a base deceiver; upon that I straitly ask'd her, if he had taken advantage of her in an unlucky moment, and had his wicked will of her. To this

is she answer'd, no, no, with great vehemence; he had deceiv'd her in another way."—"Well, well," cried Claypole, stopping her, say no more upon that subject; I am satisfied no real injury has been done to her virtue."—"None, be assur'd," echoed the old dame; "I'll stake my life upon that, and Mrs. May will certify the same."—"How!" claimed he, "Mrs. May will certify! what shows she of the affair?"—"Lackaday!" answered she; "I was fain to call in help, for young Madam was quite obstreperous; and as I knew neighbour May was knowing in these cases, I sent away for her, and well it was she came, for she quickly fetch'd her out of her fit, and quieted her."—"Well," returned Claypole, "and what became of the gentleman?"—"Oh!" cried the old woman, he took up his lodgings at Mrs. May's, and did not go off next morning till he had seen my Lady Crowbery, who stopt at the door, and took him into the chaise with her, where they sat together, as some of the neighbours tell me, for I know not how long, whilst my Lady's Gentlewoman got out to make room for him; nay, and there's more than all that, only belike you will be angry with

with me for talking to you about matters."—"Not I," quoth Claypole; "I desire you will tell of all matters that you believe or know to be true. Did Miss Manstock come to Goody May's, while the Gentleman was there?"—"Aye, did she, as sure as you are in that place alive," said the hag; "and was all alone with him ever so long in the parlour that Madam has deck'd out so finely for a new-comer amongst us, when, as all the neighbours say, she might have found some of her own poor parishioners to bestow it upon, instead of a stranger."—"What's that to the purpose?" said Claypole, peevishly, "go on with your story about Henry and Miss Manstock; are you sure they were in private together?"—"Certain sure," replied she; "for just then I call'd upon Mrs. May to return her some bottles of stuff, which had not been us'd, and as I was turning into the parlour to the closet where she keeps her drugs, she laid hold of me in a great hurry, telling me I must not go into that room for my life; I, seeing her in such a combustion, strait thought within myself, how that something was going on more than common, and taking no further notice at the time, determin'd upon peeping in

in at the window when I went away, and she was out of sight: I did so; God forgive me if I did wrong! and there I saw young Madam and her spark sitting lovingly together; not that I wou'd go to say there was any harm in what they were about; but if ever I saw any thing clearly with these eyes in my life, I saw Madam Isabella, with her head upon the Gentleman's shoulder, and his arm round her waist: Oho! said I to myself, well may our poor young Lady weep and wail at such a rate if these be your false hearted doings."

Well satisfied with the substance of this intelligence, and quick in discerning the advantages of it, Claypole departed.

CHAPTER VI.

Cunning can hold off Detection for a while.

A NATURE like Sir Roger Manstock's was not easily wrought upon by the poison of suspicion towards a character like Isabella's: Confidence, long rooted in strong affection, was not speedily to be shaken; yet his happiness was disturbed, and his spirits depressed.

depressed. When Henry was spoken of, which he frequently was by Lady Crowbery, he was either silent on the subject, or contrived to pass it off; his looks at the same time were watchfully directed towards his daughter, and the effect of them was very painfully felt. When Lady Crowbery retired for the night, he attended her himself to her chamber, and contrived to take Isabella away with him. The night passed heavily with her, and the next morning afforded no opportunity of being private with her cousin; the sad hour of departure drew near, and though there was not more than time for such friends to take a farewell, which was probably to be their last, nobody dared to speak the word; all parties fate silent; Zachary Cawdle had the consideration to keep out of the way: at last, Lady Crowbery spoke as follows:—

“ I had reserv’d many things to say to you, my dear uncle, but I perceive too late the fallacy of postponing those things to a time, when the pain of parting occupies the mind to the exclusion of all other thoughts. I shall therefore refer you for them to my letters, if my health enables me to write; if not, you will find a paper inclos’d with my will, to be
read

read by you after my death, in which my heart, and all its sorrows, is laid open to your view : be as tender to my memory when I am no more, as you have been kind and generous to me whilst living, and may Heaven reward you for it ! if I have offended you in the matter of your application for Mr. Claypole, or in the manner of my treating it in the presence of that gentleman, I am sorry for it ; but I cannot revoke my opinion of him, though I suspect it may appear to you as a very harsh one ; but this is not the moment for me to prevaricate, imprefs'd as I am with the persuasion, that it is amongst the last I have to pass with you."

" Heaven forbid !" cried the venerable Baronet, and tenderly embraced her. Isabella, weeping, next presented herself, to take her melancholy adieu ; Lady Crowbery whispered a few words to her as she was in her arms, and then, with assistance, rose from her chair, and was supported to the carriage, that waited at the door, where all the domestics of Manstock House were assembled, to offer up their good wishes for her recovery : alas ! how fruitless !

Sir Roger retired to his library, Isabella to
her

her apartment. Claypole had kept close, and did not present himself at Lady Crowbery's departure. This was not unnoticed by Sir Roger, who did not expect to meet so strong a mark of his resentment: the solemn declaration made by that lady, under the impression that they were the last words she should address to him in person, sunk deep into his mind—*I cannot revoke my opinion of him.*—He was not of a nature prone to suspicion, nor had he that gift of intuition, which can discover the real character of a man, by tracing it through the windings and involutions of artifice and cunning. Claypole, by superior acuteness of intellect, had gained a complete ascendancy over him, and preserved it long; yet he had not a little surprised Sir Roger by his solicitation for Ratcliffe's living; it struck him in the light of a dereliction of his friendship, upon motives merely mercenary; but the artful interpretation afterwards given to those motives had put a very favourable gloss upon it as to Claypole's conduct; but it fatally instilled into his mind a doubt, as to the dearest object of his affections, and for the first time shook his confidence in his beloved Isabella. This was now
the

the painful subject of his meditations ; and after opposing thought to thought, and weighing them calmly and impartially to the best of his judgment and understanding, he began to sum up the result of his reflections in the following manner :—

“ Lady Crowbery says, she cannot revoke her opinion of Mr. Claypole ; neither can I, without better proof than I am yet provided with.—If a small augmentation of his income cou’d have tempted him to turn his back upon me, I shou’d have doubted the sincerity of his friendship ; for he does not want money.—But this exchange was not the way to gain it ; therefore I am the more dispos’d to believe the reasons he assigns for seeking it.—He says, he wou’d have given his niece to Henry for my sake, for my repose,—and what can that imply, but that he apprehends me to be in danger ; and how in danger ! but that he suspects my Isabella to be attach’d to the young man, whom he wou’d have married to Miss Claypole.—This is indeed alarming ; suspicion is always so ; but I must not give way to suspicion without proofs ; hitherto he has given me none. Isabella confesses that she met him accidentally at the cottage ; what then ?
her

her very confession of it shou'd disarm suspicion; and my child has ever been ingenuous and sincere. Claypole wou'd have me think he took a dangerous connection on himself for my sake; if so, he has had an escape; why then this resentment against Henry for refusing to endanger him? But he was eager enough for the connection when I first convers'd with him about it: he sought the young man, unknown to me, confer'd with him at Crowbery, and strove to persuade him to avail himself of Blachford's legacy; that cou'd not be for my sake; there is something here that does not seem to accord: I am puzzled how to judge."

At this moment Claypole announced himself with a gentle tap at the library door, and was desired to enter. Sir Roger had well nigh entangled himself in his meditations, and probably was not sorry thus to cut the knot, which he could not untie. "Well, my good friend," said he, with a sigh, "my niece is gone, perhaps for ever: I think you was not present to take leave of her."—"My presence, I am afraid," replied Claypole, "cou'd not have been agreeable to her, nor my respects acceptable."—"To me at least they wou'd, if not

not to her," said Sir Roger.—"To you they never can be wanting," resumed he; "of which this tender of them is my witness, when I am fitter for my bed than to be about."—"I am very sorry you are indisposed," resumed the Baronet; "for I confess to you there was part of your conversation last night which has left my thoughts in a state of great inquietude."—"If that be so," replied Claypole, "I am quite at leisure to satisfy you upon any points you may wish to have explain'd; clear in conscience, and cordial in my zeal for your interest and content, I can never be taken unprovided with a strait answer to any questions you may choose to ask."—"I cannot doubt you," quoth the Baronet; "and shall accordingly avail myself of your indulgence. I think you stated the proposed connection with young Henry and Miss Claypole as a dangerous one, but which, nevertheless, you was resolute to encounter upon reasons that had respect to my repose, the nature of which I can well understand."—"I did so."—"Did you see it in that light of danger when you first started it in our conversation together in the hall?"—"I do not perfectly call to mind how I saw it, or how I started it upon that occasion; it was a night

of bustle and confusion ; we had fate long and indulged freely at table.”—“ We had so,” rejoined Sir Roger ; “ yet I remember you embrac’d it with so much seeming warmth and good liking, that if you was then projecting to make a sacrifice of your own interests to mine, you really mask’d your motives so effectually, that I was not aware of the concern I had in them.”—“ That they were my motives,” said Claypole, “ I can truly assert ; that you did not discover them might very naturally happen, as I did not study the display of a disinterested action, and cautiously avoided alarming you with danger which I was in hopes to divert from you for ever : but, added to this, might it not happen, that I thought better of the young man at that time than I have done since ? I am free to say, notwithstanding Lady Crowbery’s decision against me for my opinion in that case, I did not approve of his romantic heroism in begging himself for Susan May’s bastard : he held a very haughty language to me upon that occasion, and I do not think it became him either to talk or to act as he did in that affair.”—To this Sir Roger replied, “ A haughty language did not become him, and
a dis-

a disrespectful one towards a person of your age and character was greatly reprehensible ; but as for the act itself, I cannot but regard it as a very honourable one.”—“ Sir,” said Claypole, “ these are high-flown fancies ; the fellow is a beggar with a fair face and a proud stomach ; he lives upon charity.”—“ And that charity will enable him to live,” said Sir Roger calmly.—“ Scantily, I shou’d guess,” replied Claypole ; “ some small provision Lady Crowbery may have made for him in her will, but I shou’d hope her Ladyship will not heap any great matters upon such an one as him, to the detriment of your family.”—“ There, Sir,” returned the Baronet, “ you are much more zealous for my family than I am myself : my estate is more than sufficient for all my occasions, sure it will suffice to portion one daughter.”—“ Permit me then,” replied Claypole, “ to say to you, Sir, without offence, that I sincerely hope that daughter will never have any other interest in Lady Crowbery’s property but what that lady herself may bequeath to her as Miss Manstock.”—“ I clearly comprehend you,” said Sir Roger ; “ and as you mean it so I receive it : and now I call upon you as my friend, to tell me, without
I 2 reserve.

reserve, upon what proofs you ground your apprehensions of my daughter's attachment to this young man; suspicion is a serious thing; I am persuaded you wou'd not frivolously alarm it: be so good to tell me what you have discover'd in Miss Manstock's conduct."—"Pardon me," replied Claypole; "I pretend to take no other part than that of a warning friend; I do not covet the character of an informing spy: let the woman of the cottage be interrogated."—"Not so," said Sir Roger calmly; "let my child, with your leave, be fairly heard before I call witnesses to the charge against her. Let me at least make trial of her sincerity; she has never yet deceiv'd me to my knowledge, and I should be loth to take a secret course with her; and now as you have, with so much friendly zeal, made my repose and the honour of my family your own concern, let me request you will be present whilst I ask a few questions of my daughter as from myself." Claypole instantly started from his seat, and resolutely protested against such a proposal, saying that he had no desire to be made a party in family disputes, either by being set up as an umpire between father and daughter, or called to the indelicate office of
deposing

deposing against a young lady: he had spoken his fears in the way of caution; if they were investigated, he did not doubt but they would be found not to have been lightly taken up, but he confessed he had not sufficient firmness to assert them to the face of so fair a lady. This said, he left the room.

CHAPTER VII.

*Let the Man, who suspects, resort speedily to
Explanation.*

“CAN this be pure friendship?” said Sir Roger within himself, as Claypole parted from him; “I am willing to hope it is, but I can hardly think it has all the characteristics of it.” He now went up stairs to his daughter’s dressing-room, where he found her alone; she had been weeping, and was sitting in a pensive posture without any employment. He approached her gently, for sorrow claims respect, and in a tender tone he said, “You have been in tears, my child; but I cannot wonder at it, ’tis an affecting trial to take leave of so dear a friend with so little hope of ever meeting again. I feel it deeply too; I believe

my affliction is as heavy as your own."—"I hope not," replied Isabella, "because I am afraid I have more losses than one to aggravate my affliction."—"Of what loss do you complain besides this of Lady Crowbery?" said he, in the accent of alarm.—"Of the loss of your confidence, Sir," returned she, looking up in his face with conscious innocence. The appeal was irresistible; the most hardened tyrant would have felt it; how could it fail to touch the tender heart of so affectionate a father? "Not so, my child," said he; "you have not lost my confidence; you will not lose it; you will merit an increase of it, your candour will confirm and fix it beyond the reach of doubt for ever after."—"In truth," she replied, "my heart is exactly as nature and you have made it; it is conscious of no guilt, and I have taught it no disguise; prove it therefore and examine it; tell me all that you suspect, all that has been reported to you, all that your own fears suggest, and leave no particle undisturbed, for never can I be happy whilst any doubt remains to cloud that countenance which hitherto has smil'd upon me so serenely."—" 'Tis spoken like yourself," said the father, his countenance brightening as he said it; "and

“and now, my dear, I shou’d be glad to know, provided you can tell me with honour to Lady Crowbery, what it was she said to you in a whisper when you took leave of each-other.”

—“Readily,” answered Isabella; “and the rather because it was advice that does her credit, tho’ in justice to myself I must add, I did not then stand in need of it. She had observ’d you was startled at my meeting Henry at the cottage, she suspected Mr. Claypole had been alarming you on the subject, and she advis’d me to be sincere in relating to you every thing that pass’d between us: this was the purport of what she whisper’d to me, and this I am now most perfectly ready to fulfil.”

Here it may be proper to inform our readers, that Isabella in this statement reported truly as far as she went, but candour, it is hoped, will acquit her if she did not betray what was further divulged to her in strict secrecy; for in that parting moment Lady Crowbery, impressed with a sad presentiment that she should never see her more, had imparted to her the mystery of Henry’s birth, avowing him to be her son by Captain Delapoer, and informing her that she had ‘made him her heir.

In return for this candid tender Sir Roger observed, that it was not merely the circumstance of her meeting Henry, and conversing with him without a third person present that gave him alarm; that must have often happened whilst he was a visitor in his house; but in this business there was a seeming secrecy and mysteriousness in their meeting that gave it the air of a concerted assignation; that his sudden departure without a word said or written to him by way of farewell favoured that appearance; and he added, that he could not well account for his declining a connection every way so flattering and so advantageous to a person in his circumstance as that with Miss Claypole, any otherwise than as having an attachment elsewhere.

In answer to this Isabella assured him, that her meeting with Henry at the cottage was purely accidental: he had a wound which broke out afresh whilst she was there and bled profusely; she staid with him whilst it was dressed; it was a deep stab in the arm: she remained some time after it was stanchd, and they were left to themselves; he then told her that his treaty with Miss Claypole was broken off; the reasons for it he did not tell, but he
certainly

certainly did not speak of it with any regret, nor did she believe he had ever considered it either as an advantageous or agreeable connection. As to her father's observation, that he had not communicated with him in any manner, she said she could only ascribe that to his fear of being questioned about his wound, of which she found him very unwilling to give any other account than in general terms as an accident, and even this she observed was unpleasant to him to speak of. "Did he come wounded from his interview with Fanny Claypole?"—"She believed he did."—"Then he got it there."—"She understood so."

Sir Roger pondered upon this for some time in silence; he then renewed the conversation in the following manner: "This is a dark business, Isabella: Fanny Claypole is a girl of a violent temper; as for Henry, I shou'd be unjust if I did not bear testimony to his good principles as far as I have had experience of them: his person, manners and behaviour are highly impressive; the situation in which I found him, the unjust treatment he had suffer'd, and his deportment under it, prejudic'd me strongly in his favour; my niece Crowsberry's protection in the first instance was natural,

tural, as considering him the elve of Ratcliffe and undeservedly distress'd: I warmly coincided with it: it afterwards grew more ardent, I was alarm'd at it; it now is become mysterious, and I cannot understand it. When I invited him into my house, I did not forget that I possess'd a beautiful daughter, the heiress of my fortune and the darling of my soul; but such was the distance of your conditions from each other, such my confidence in your discretion, and my opinion of his proper understanding of himself, that I own to you I foresaw no danger, and let me hope I have incur'd none. But if my confidence has led me into error, or he, mistaking your pity for encouragement, has been rash enough to attempt your affections, it is now high time that I endeavour to repair that error by calling you to a recollection of yourself and me."

"And what," she demanded, "wou'd my father prescribe to me for his future assurance and content?"

"I wou'd have you keep in mind," he replied, "that I exact no other rights than nature has endow'd me with, when I require you, if ever you entertain'd a thought of this young man, to call to mind now in good time my solemn

lemn declaration, that I never will admit of your connection with a man so circumstanc'd : I never wish to force your inclinations, have no unreasonable ambition to ally you to great rank or overgrown estate ; but to absolute obscurity, to mystery, to an unknown creature, parentless and nameless, I cannot, will not sacrifice my child."

"How just and reasonable," said she, "is that denunciation ! I seal it with my promise faithfully to adhere to it."

"Take notice," added the father, "that Blachford's whole possessions cou'd have made no change in my resolves, nor been of any avail to him, as he is."

"I understand it perfectly," she said, "he must be known ; his history must be develop'd and his parentage clearly ascertain'd. Shou'd time bring that to light, and set him forth to view as unexceptionable in birth and condition as he is amiable in character and manners, may I not presume my father wou'd relax?"—"Stop there," he cried, "nor cherish such delusions, which will only prove you have him more at heart than I cou'd wish. Alas ! alas ! my child, I fear your eyes have led your understanding astray ; I doubt, Isabella, you are

captivated by what the worst as well as the best, the meanest as well as the most noble may present to you, a handsome person."—

"Surely, my dear Sir," said Isabella blushing, "you just now spoke with approbation of his principles."

"I did so," he replied, "and I will not unsay it. He has done generous actions, noble ones, that would extort applause even from his enemy, which I am not."

"But he has enemies," she rejoined; "at least there are some minds so hostile to merit, or so perverted by malice, as to allow him no applause."

"I grant you," replied Sir Roger; "but Claypole is angry with him for refusing his niece."

"Ah, Sir!" returned the lovely Isabella, "then Henry, I fear, will soon experience the effects of his anger."

"That would be hard," Sir Roger observed, "as he suspected he had received one wound from the family already."

"But there are deeper and more fatal wounds than he has yet felt," said Isabella, "that he has still to apprehend; I have reason to believe that a stab in your opinion, would
afflict

afflict him more than any thing his flesh can suffer."

"Come, come," said the worthy Baronet, with a parental smile, "Henry may have enemies, but I perceive he has one steady friend, and that friend has great power, for she is very near my heart."

With these words he rose from his seat, approached her with a gentle aspect, and, having impressed a kiss upon her forehead, departed.

CHAPTER VIII.

She, who confesses less than the Whole, may save a Blush, but will incur a Danger.

ISABELLA found the anguish of her mind allayed by the preceding conversation with her father; it had not totally extinguished it. There were still some tender incidents belonging to her interview with Henry, which remained untold; yet upon reflection she could hardly be persuaded, to attach any degree of self reproach to the omission of such incidents in her narrative, as it was next to impossible

impossible to convey by any form of words the delicacy of those circumstances which introduced, and the purity of those sensations which admitted these chaste and innocent endearments. How could she find expressions that would describe what was passing in the mind of Henry, when starting from his reverie on her sudden appearance in his room, he wildly ran and caught her in his arms, unmindful of his wound that burst instantly open? In the like degree language would have failed her to impress him with a just conception of those soft but guiltless emotions, occasioned by the sight of the blood flowing from his wound, by the tenderness of his looks, his language, and the mixt assemblage of enervating ideas at the touching crisis of departure, which had caused her to sink under a momentary oppression of spirits, whilst he supported her in his arms. This she despaired to paint in terms that could exemplify a scene, which nothing, but the manner of it could strictly justify, and none but a spectator could completely understand.

Therefore it was that her ingenuous nature found a plea in its own want of powers for letting these small incidents remain untold,
and

and who that has a heart, which love or pity ever touched, but will subscribe a wish that they had been unseen ?

In the next conversation that took place between Claypole and Sir Roger, the latter repeated the substance of what had passed between himself and his daughter ; expressing his entire satisfaction in the result of it, and declaring in the joy of his heart, that he was now perfectly at ease with respect to his late alarm, about the interview at the cottage. Claypole affected to receive this account with pleasure, saying he was very glad he had taken that method of investigation, which made the quickest dispatch in dismissing his uneasiness ; happiness, he observed, was worth obtaining even by delusion, and for that reason he would recommend to him to sit down contented with the account he had received, though it was from the party concerned, and not expose himself to the risque of future inquietude by investigating the affair any further, or seeking after witnesses whose accounts might perhaps perplex him, by differing in some particulars from that which had been so satisfactory. He then with an air of indifference turned the discourse to some other subject, and left his observation

ervation to work as it might, or might not, within the mind of his friend to whom he addressed it.

The next day Ezekiel Daw walked over from Crowbery, upon a visit to his friend Dame May at the cottage, bearing a kind message from her daughter, and inviting her to take up her abode with her at the deceased Mr. Blachford's house, where, by advice of her friends, she purposed to establish herself and the infant heir. He was also encharged by Susan to apologize on her behalf, in the most respectful terms, to Miss Manstock, for her not paying her duty in person, and with other small commissions to be settled with the servants. This brought him to the great house, after halting on his way at the widow's, and his arrival was announced to Isabella, as she was in company with her father and Mr. Claypole. She would fain have left the room to attend upon him, but the thought struck Sir Roger to have him introduced to the parlour, declaring that he was not only greatly taken with the oddity of his character, but that he esteemed him as a very upright honest creature.

Ezekiel made his advances in a respectful manner

manner to the worthy Baronet, and was by him very kindly welcomed to Manstock House. He acquitted himself of his commission to the young Lady after his manner properly enough, and then made an effort to take leave, but was stayed by a question from Sir Roger, relative to the amount of what Mr. Blachford had bequeathed to his heir: Ezekiel said that it consisted of property in Jamaica, which returned about two thousand pounds one year with another, as far as he could understand, with about ten thousand pounds in money, and the small estate at Crowbery; but he desired not to be understood as speaking correctly. Sir Roger said in an under-voice to Claypole,—“It is not so much as I guessed he was possessed of, but it is a great deal for a poor man to give up upon principle.” He then enquired if there were any legacies: Ezekiel informed him there were a few; upon which Claypole said,—“I suppose you have got a legacy, sir;”—“No, reverend sir,” replied the good man, “I have no legacy, nor did I covet one; it fits not the servant of Christ to be greedily after gain.”—“Then I suppose,” resumed he, “that it was by your advice Mr. Fitzhenry declined

his legacy ;"—" Not so, sir," replied Ezekiel, " the first I heard of it was just before you came into my poor cottage, when, if I mistake not, you disapprov'd of that act, which in my humble opinion was a very meritorious one : but it is not by the praise or dispraise of men that actions can be truly tried ; Heaven knows that excellent young man hath receiv'd little else but unjust judgment upon earth, and evil treatment from cruel hands. Even now he is gone forth to sea most barbarously wounded."—" Do you pretend to know then," said Claypole, " how he got that wound ?"—" Yes, reverend sir," replied Ezekiel, rising in his tone, " I do pretend to know."—" Stop there, Mr. Daw," cried Isabella, hastily interposing, " I dare say your absent friend wou'd not wish you to speak of that affair in this company, or any other ; I beseech you say no more upon the subject :"—" Lady, I obey," answered Ezekiel, " and verily I am beholden to you for your timely counsel." Silence now ensuing, honest Daw made his bow and retired.

" Pray, Madam," said Claypole, " may I ask without offence why you stopp'd that man's answer to a question, which I who put it to him

him

him had a right to expect, and no repugnance to meet?"—"Because I am persuaded," replied Isabella, "he had received no account of the transaction from the person who receiv'd the wound, and I think it was both dangerous and improper for him to speak upon any other authority:"—"Suffer me to observe," said he, "that I do not see the justice of saving any man from the danger of a malicious story, when it is clear he has the propensity to publish it. Had he been suffer'd to proceed, we might have been led through the medium of falsehood to the investigation of truth, and I might have had a fair opportunity of vindicating the character of my niece, as well as of punishing the wickedness of her defamers. But I perceive Ezekiel Daw, the itinerant preacher, is consider'd by you as a sacred person; and under your shield, Madam, how can it be expected that my arm can reach him, or indeed be rais'd against him? I perceive, Madam, there is a design to propagate a most villainous story, and to affix a murderous intent upon a matter of mere accident. When the wounded gentleman got his hurt, nobody was present but my niece; I am at a loss, therefore, to think from whom

else

else this evil report shou'd originate but from him." To this Isabella steadily replied, "Whatever term you may affix to the report, I dare say it did not spring from him, if indeed it be an evil one it cou'd not."—"Then, Madam," replied Claypole, "we must lay it at the door of some tattling gossip, who, gathering some expressions from the terrified imagination of my niece, when the sight of the accident had thrown her into fits, founded this malicious interpretation of it; and if that be all, I am sure the wisest way is to disregard it; for in truth their silly fables merit nothing but contempt; they pretend to hear things that were never said, and to see things that probably were never done, and then they fasten their fictions upon you and upon Henry, and perhaps upon every one of us in our turn."—"What do they fasten upon me, may I ask?" demanded Isabella.—"What I paid little or no attention to when I heard it, yet it serves to shew how ingenious they are in their idle devices not to let the purest character escape their tongues; what wonder then if their scandal is busy with my poor niece?"—"There is a mysteriousness in this story," said Sir Roger, "and I think all such shou'd be fairly produced"

duc'd with their authors, especially where a lady's name is made use of."—"I am clearly of that opinion," replied Claypole; "and I hold it to be a duty which I owe to you, to this amiable young lady, and to truth itself, not to let any report affecting her enter my ears without giving up both it and the author, whom I am the less inclin'd to screen because she belongs to me for the present; and as I am persuaded Miss Manstock can confute her tale, I shall instantly proceed to punish her by a dismissal from my service, and sorry I shall be that my power reaches no farther."—"This is perfectly candid in you," said Sir Roger; "and what I shou'd expect from your friendship; but without more delay let us hear the story; I will venture to say my daughter has no objection to hearing it."—"None in life," replied she, "if Mr. Claypole has none to the relation of it; but indeed he has now gone too far to suppress it."

"It is soon told, Madam," said Claypole, "and I doubt not as soon confuted; but my foolish old woman at the vicarage pretends to say, that calling upon the widow May whilst you and Mr. Fitzhenry were together, she was prevented from entering the room where

you

you were, with so much appearance of alarm on the part of the good woman who guarded the door, that suspecting there was a secret, and naturally curious, as such silly old gossips are apt to be, she took her opportunity of peeping in at the window, and discover'd you in an attitude (impossible upon the face of it!) for the impudent hussy says she saw him with his arm round your waist, and your head reclining upon his shoulder."—"How's that?" cried Sir Roger with vehemence, starting at the same moment on his legs; "does the infamous trollop say that? I'll have her taken up and committed to the house of correction."—"No, Sir," said Isabella, "sinking—as I was under my alarm at the bloody spectacle I had been surveying, I can still recollect too much of my situation at that moment not to remember that there was a person came up to the window whilst Henry was supporting me, and if this is the person she says no more than the truth, which Mr. Claypole has very faithfully reported, with what intent he best knows; but justice compels me to say that correction is not due to the woman." There was an air of so much conscious innocence in Isabella's ready explanation and confession, that Claypole instantly

stantly perceived he had missed his aim in her particular at least, but in Sir Roger he had lodged his shaft. A strict observer of decorum in all its antiquated rigour, he only looked to consequences, not to cause; it was enough for him to know his daughter had submitted to the embrace of this young man, and that she had been a spectacle for vulgar eyes in that degrading situation; it struck him with a painful recollection, that she had suppressed this circumstance in the account she had given him at first; and turning a severe look to his daughter, he said, "Isabella, you never see that young man again whilst you live; at least within my doors never. You have deceiv'd me, child, for the first time: you have conceal'd from me a fact, whilst you made me believe you had ingenuously related the whole of what pass'd between you. You have been discover'd in a situation unfit for you to be seen in by a peasant in the parish, who, having gratified her own curiosity, will not spare to gratify the curiosity of others, and the tale will be circulated through the neighbourhood, to your shame and to mine."

To this our heroine instantly replied as follows:—"When I assure my father that such

was

was the state of my nerves at the time I was discover'd in the situation Mr. Claypole has been describing, that I must have sunk upon the floor had not Henry prevented it, I flatter myself I shall not be thought guilty of any great offence against propriety in accepting of his support, neither, perhaps, can he be justly condemn'd for giving it. I hope I have not hitherto been found so disingenuous as not to deserve credit for what I assert, nor so flippant as to be thought capable of throwing myself voluntarily into any man's arms. The sight of a deep and terrible wound streaming with blood upon the floor, and the assistance that humanity compeli'd me to give in stanching the wound, was a scene so new and alarming to me that my spirits cou'd not stand against it. I confess to you I suppress this circumstance in my discourse with you, but I had motives for so doing which did not spring from any consciousness of guilt or dread of explanation on my own part: my silence had respect to others, not to myself; and the same motives that led me to stop Ezekiel Daw just now from speaking on this subject, operated with me, and will operate, for avoiding as far as it is in my power any mention of that affair." She then turned

to Mr. Claypole, and, in a calm, unembarrassed accent, said, " You will now perceive, that your foolish old woman, as you call her, has done nothing to incur your displeasure, or to merit the punishment you threaten her with ; she had only the curiosity to peep in at a window, and seems to have related to you, very faithfully, what she discover'd, which you, Sir, as faithfully, have related to my father ; this, no doubt, you did in the pure spirit of friendship to my father ; and I have only to say, for his sake, that I hope this will be the last proof of your friendship, accompanied with pain to him, and that every subsequent one will communicate nothing but pleasure. You have, however, told him something, which I had not told him, and so far I am made to appear evasive and disingenuous ; but I have given you the clue to my exculpation, and, if you have a mind to pursue it, you will be led to the clear understanding of my motives. I am willing to interpret the part you have taken as meant for my good ; and, indeed, if I have been guilty of thinking more favourably of this mysterious young man, than you conceive I ought to think, your measures have been so far crown'd with success, that you have

had the satisfaction to hear my father declare, that I am never again to see that person whilst I live, at least within his doors. To this I answer, I have never yet disobey'd my father's commands, nor ever will; let him therefore repeat that solemn denunciation again, and here I am ready as solemnly to pledge myself to the observance of it, let it cost me what it will. I desire to live but to please him, and only whilst I please him; and tho' I don't wish to hold back the very high opinion I entertain of this proscrib'd young man, (or, if you please to give it any other name that purity may acknowledge, I will confess to that) yet I now declare, I will never hereafter hold correspondence, direct or indirect, with him, unless it shall be with the privity and consent, nay, even by the requisition and desire, of my father himself. This, Sir, I presume, will satisfy you, if you are sincerely bent to oppose my attachment; and if my dear father is truly desirous to interdict it, he will, I dare say, confide in what I have promis'd."

CHAPTER IX.

A tempting Offer benotably withstood.

TO this defence Claypole made no reply, neither did Sir Roger seem in haste to speak; for the gust of anger, which artifice had raised, innocence and truth had now dispelled. He turned his eyes upon the accuser first, and then upon his daughter; each look was decisive to the party it was addressed to; neither of them stood in need of any further explanation of the opinion he entertained; at last, turning to Claypole, he said, "I think, Sir, it had been better for us both if you had not listen'd to this eaves-dropper; for it appears to me, that you have gather'd nothing from her information, but what my Isabella has very naturally accounted for.—" "It is very well," replied Claypole; "I know the consequences of over-zealous friendship, and none can accrue to me, which I am not prepar'd for." With these words he left the room.

"He is very angry," said Sir Roger; "but his disappointments vex him: rebuff'd by Lady Crowbery, rebuff'd by Henry, and tormented.

mented with his niece, his vexations have follow'd close upon one another ; we must make allowances for men's tempers; and Claypole's is not the most patient, therefore let it pass; we'll say no more of him: and now, my child, a word or two with you upon what is nearest to my heart—your happiness, and a right understanding betwixt us. It is clear to me, Isabella, that you are attach'd to this young unknown; that is a very serious thing, truly; for who is he, and what is he? If you can answer to these points, explain to me, satisfy me. I am not greedy of wealth, I am not ambitious of titles for you; but the character and condition of a gentleman is an indispensable requisite in the person of my son-in-law; I cannot away with obscurity or meanness; therefore, if you know any thing of Henry, tell it to me; 'tis your own concern, and, if a secret, I will not reveal it."

"I am sure you wou'd not," replied she; "and was a secret imparted to me, under strict injunctions to keep it inviolable, I am no less sure, you wou'd hold me base, shou'd I reveal it; I hope, therefore, you will not regard it as a breach of duty, if I decline an answer to your question."

"Hold there," replied the father; "I am

apt

apt to think it is a part of your duty to take no secrets into your trust in which I am not to share, especially when they are committed to you by a young man like Henry.”—“ But if I have it not from him,” said she, “ the case does not apply.”

“ No matter,” rejoined he; “ it is of him, it relates to him, and that’s reason enough why I shou’d know it. In one word, Isabella, give me up the matter of your information without the author of it, and if it appears, to my satisfaction, that this young man is by birth a gentleman, and such as I can with propriety adopt into my family, I pass my word to you, that I will no longer oppose myself to your inclinations, for his character and manners please me, and I can well believe his person not less engaging; but if you will not confide to me what you know of this young man, I shall take for granted it is not fit to be known, and, in that persuasion, exert the authority of a father for laying my injunctions upon you, never to let me see his face, or hear his name again; neither shall I forgive you, if I discover that you carry on any correspondence with him, or about him. This, Isabella, is your alternative; now take your choice, and the consequences of your choice.”

A stronger temptation than was now offered to Isabella could hardly present itself; but her steady nature rejected it without scruple, and by persisting in her good faith to Lady Crowbery, she incurred, to her infinite regret, the displeasure of her father, most tenderly beloved: the conference, therefore, concluded in anger on his part, and in a solemn promise on her's, to hold no correspondence with Henry, nor, even through her cousin Lady Crowbery, about him in future. Time, it is true, might probably develope the mystery which her honour would not suffer her to do, and to that alone she trusted for a justification of her silence, both towards her father and her lover.

The Rev. Mr. Claypole, meanwhile, betook himself in sullen discontent to his chamber, there to meditate upon future measures: in the interim, a letter was delivered to him, which had come by special messenger from Crowbery Castle, the contents of which were as follow:—

“ My dear Uncle,

“ In consequence of a most polite invitation
 “ from the worthy Lord of this castle, I have
 “ been prevail'd upon to take up my abode
 “ here for a few days. The chief inducement
 “ with me for accepting this solicitation was,
 “ the

“ the opportunity it affords me of being within
“ reach of my dear uncle, without the pain of
“ taking up my residence in the same place
“ with a family from whom I have received the
“ most unhandsome treatment. Nothing can
“ exceed the kindness and attention of Lord
“ Crowbery, and I am charged by him, in
“ the most earnest manner, to request the fa-
“ vour of your company at the castle : I am
“ sure you will not regret the change from
“ Manstock House ; and, if I have any interest
“ with you, his request will be complied with,
“ the rather as I find myself, in Lady Crow-
“ bery’s absence, in a situation to stand in
“ need of your cover and protection, being at
“ present the only female visitor in the house.

“ I am, ever your’s,

“FRANCES CLAYPOLE.”

Nothing could be more acceptable to Mr. Claypole, in his present state of mind, than the invitation which this letter conveyed ; it relieved him from a situation, of which he was heartily sick, and offered him the gratification of putting a slight upon Lady Crowbery, of the most pointed sort : he well knew how it would be felt by Sir Roger Manstock, and on

that very account he embraced it the more readily; for there was no longer any trace of past favours in his memory, and of favours to come all expectation was at an end. He had, however, views upon futurity in Lord Crowbery's particular; for he had seen enough of Lady Crowbery, to set her down, in his account, as a dead woman, and his niece Fanny was a very lively one. He had more than once taken her with him to the castle, in times when better harmony subsisted between the families, and on those visits Fanny had made her way much better with the lord than with the lady of the house, with the latter of whom, to say the truth, she was in no great favour. The fact was, that Lady Crowbery regarded her character with contempt, and Fanny imputed it to jealousy; to rouse this passion was a gratification too agreeable to be resisted, and therefore, though his Lordship was nothing less than an Adonis, there was amusement at least in the experiment, and she considered it as no small triumph to engage the attention of a man, who was capable of neglecting a most lovely woman, and devoting himself to her. Her purpose in hastening from the vicarage, in the manner we have related, was with the
view

view of obtaining one more interview with Henry, or, at least, of gaining such intelligence as might satisfy her as to the consequences of his wound; she therefore boldly shaped her course towards the port he was to embark at, but in passing through the village of Crowbery, luckily fell in with the noble proprietor, who was cheering his spirits with a morning ride, in his lady's absence, and, after some importunity, prevailed upon her to stop short in her progress, and repose herself in the castle. Here she remained some time, till propriety, or something else, dictated to her the expedient of writing to her uncle in manner above related, to which his Lordship, with equal propriety, very courteously acceded.

Sir Roger Manstock, who perceived that his daughter was in possession of a secret that he could not extort from her, concluded, very naturally, that it came from Lady Crowbery; and this brought to his recollection, what she had said to him upon their parting, relative to the paper she had inclosed under the same cover with her will, to be opened after her death. This packet he had deposited in his strong box; it was under four seals, and evidently enveloped more papers than one: he

had no doubt, from Isabella's answers, that the secret she had in charge from Lady Crowbery related to Henry's birth, and that it would be discovered upon the opening of this packet. He could not reconcile to himself the being excluded from a confidence which had been reposed in his daughter, and was not a little discontented to find, that his niece had referred him to her death for a discovery that she had already made to Isabella.

He now summoned Isabella to him, and holding Lady Crowbery's packet in his hand, addressed himself to her as follows:—"I am here encharged with a paper, seal'd as you see, containing your cousin's will, and other private matters, which are only to be open'd by me upon the event of her death; I have no doubt but it incloses a discovery of that very secret, which she has already imparted to you, and that it refers to the mystery of this young man's birth, who has caus'd so much unhappiness to me and my family. I understand withal, that I am to be the executor of this will, and, most probably, of certain instructions and trusts relative to the gentleman, who is then, for the first time, to be made known to me. Now these are terms that I will not agree

agree to; I am no dealer in obscure matters, and it is therefore become my fixt resolution peremptorily to decline the commission, and so to inform Lady Crowbery, by special express, unless you are prepar'd to tell me what it is you know of these secret contents, so far as they relate to the person called Henry Fitz-Henry; for I do not hold it becoming me, in any respect, to be surpris'd into a trust that may involve me with a person whom at present I have every reason to hold at distance, and for whom, perhaps, I may never choose to be concern'd, even in the most trifling degree. Now then, Isabella, let me ask you, if what I have been saying seems reasonable, and whether you rightly comprehend it?" To this she replied in the affirmative; upon which he thus proceeded:—"If it is reasonable then that I shou'd not be blindly committed in a business I am ignorant of, and if you are interested to retain these papers in my hands, rather than to have them sent back to her from whom they came, you have the alternative at your choice; tell me what you know of them, or take the consequences, and abide by the promise you have made me: never let me hear the name of Henry Fitz-Henry from your lips any more."

“If that be the alternative,” replied the lovely Isabella, whilst the tears started in her eyes, “necessity imposes the hard task upon me of abiding by the painful consequences you have stated. Can I violate my promise? Ought not every trust to be held sacred? This is of all most sacred, and I dare not betray it. Let me then, for the last time in your hearing, declare, that wherever this discarded person, whose name I will not utter in your ears, shall betake himself, he carries with him, to the end of life, my prayers, my blessings, my unalienable affections, and my heart for ever; but let not this ingenuous confession of my love shake your confidence in my honour, for upon my knees I take to witness truth, and Heaven itself, that I will faithfully perform the promise I have made you, and, renouncing him, devote myself to your commands and to my duty.”

CHAPTER X.

Where is the Daughter, that may not take a Lesson from our Heroine?

THE definitive answer, which our last chapter concludes with, put a period to any further conference between the respective parties, and determined Sir Roger Manstock to take the very measure he had threatened to pursue. He immediately wrote a letter to his niece, explanatory of his sensations with respect to Henry, and beseeching her to excuse him from any trust that had relation to a person, who had caused him such uneasiness, and whom he was determined never to be connected with: he also informed her of the promise made to him by his daughter, and prayed her to send down a trusty person, properly authorized, into whose hands he might safely render back the packet she had entrusted to him: he then concluded, in the most conciliating terms that his tenderness could suggest, wishing her a return of health, and assuring her of his unalterable affection.

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A servant was ordered to set off express with this letter, who had directions where to find the lady in town, if he did not overtake her on the road, of which, however, there was the greatest probability, as her daily stages were very short.

In the mean time our amiable heroine did not, like some others, dedicate every hour to sullen silence and continual melancholy; for though her private moments were sad enough, she had yet a smile for her father when they met, and the same eyes that showered tears in secret, reassumed their native cheerful lustre when her parent was in sight.

Not so the Reverend Mr. Claypole; there was something in his breast resembling those goads and stings which disappointed malice or ambition sometimes entertain themselves with in secret, in the way of penance for attempts which conscience does not quite approve of. He was indeed superior to that tergiversation and incertitude of purpose, which consciences over nice sometimes impose upon resolutions not over strong; for he was firmly resolved to turn his back upon his old friend, and his face towards his new one; but he could not quite persuade himself that such a resolve had all the qualities

qualities of a virtuous purpose ; for he could not but feel that he ought to be grateful to the one, and suspicious of the other. He had motives, however, and principles of action in his mind, which some soft souls in the world seem to know nothing of ; amongst these, the gratification that his visit to Lord Crowbery would administer to his mind, as an insult to the patroness of Ratcliffe's living, was to him very pleasing on reflection. That his visit would be highly offensive to Sir Roger, and cut off his return for ever after to the house of Manstock, he clearly saw ; but there was no loss could accrue from an exclusion, where he never wished more to be admitted. In fact, he saw how totally he was ruined in this family ; and having no doubt that his niece had dealt the stab to Henry, he was not sorry to avail himself of the protection of Lord Crowbery, and the countenance, which his reception of her would give to her story, in opposition to all others ; but what above all weighed with him for accepting the invitation was, the hope it held out to his ambition, upon the event of Lady Crowbery's death, if his niece would consent to govern herself by his advice.

Reasoning in this manner, he prepared for

his

his departure from the house of his friend; and this he did so secretly and expeditiously, that he stole his march, unknown to Sir Roger, leaving only the few following lines as his apology and adieu:—

“ Mr. Claypole leaves his respectful compliments to Sir Roger Manstock, with thanks for all favours: the duty which he owes to a much-injur'd orphan niece compels him to so hasty a departure, that time, conspiring with his own feelings, prevents him from taking leave in person of a friend, whom he has so long and justly held in honour.”

An order was now dispatched from Sir Roger, directing Dame May to come to him at the Great House. This was instantly obeyed by the good woman, who was given to understand, in a few words, that her longer residence in the house, which Isabella had provided for her, would be very readily dispensed with. To this she immediately answered, that she would without delay prepare for her removal, having received an invitation from her daughter, who, by the blessing of Providence, was now in a condition to support her; she therefore begged
leave

leave to return her humble thanks for the favours she had received, and would no longer be a burthen to his charity; she would be gone that very night, if Sir Roger wished it, and leave the few things she had in the house to follow her the next day. To this the Baronet shortly answered, that it was very well, and there the business would have closed, but that it occurred to him, as she was leaving the room, to put a question to her for curiosity's sake, respecting Fanny Claypole, which was simply this,—“If she understood or believed, that the stab in Henry's arm was given by her hand purposely and revengefully?” The poor woman was staggered with the abruptness of the question, and the stern manner in which it was put. She hesitated through fear and confusion; upon which, in an angry tone, Sir Roger told her, he had no wish to hear her answer, for he should put little faith in what anybody said, who was not always ready with a plain reply to a plain question, and with this rebuke waved his hand and dismissed her.

In relating this short scene as it passed, we are sensible that we must represent the character of the worthy Baronet in a harsher light than it has hitherto been seen; but in
extenuation

extenuation we have to say, that he had impressions on his mind not favourable to this poor woman, and was also disturbed in temper at the present moment, by the valedictory note of his seceding friend Mr. Claypole, just before delivered into his hands. Under the same impression, he was meditating to give orders for dismantling the cottage of its furniture, when Isabella entered the room, upon which he thought proper to apprize her of his design, qualifying it with some introductory observations upon the jealousy, which such favours created in the parish, and the unsuitable elegance with which she had fitted the apartment: "With your leave, therefore," added he, "I shall give orders to have the furniture remov'd, and the cottage reduc'd to a condition better fitted to the poverty of the next inhabitants, whom charity may recommend to it." Isabella bowed her head in token of obedience, but felt the unkindness of this order in the most poignant manner; she recollected that she had been allowed to consider this little tenement as her own, and to carry on her works, both within doors and without, after her own simple but elegant fancy: the resumption of a fond gift, and the reversal

reversal of all her little amusing operations, by a decree so peremptory and unexpected, struck deep into her heart, yet she commanded herself so far, when asked if she had any further use for the furniture, as to make answer with great mildness and submission, that there was nothing there she particularly wished to preserve, but a certain print, which she had hung up in the parlour, as a memorial of the donor, and the similitude of a face, which had ever been accustomed to look upon her with the tenderest affection. "Pooh! pooh!" replied Sir Roger, "you have copies enough of that unhappy countenance, and I would advise you to put this out of the way as speedily as you can, lest it shou'd sometime or other tell tales of what it has been a spectator of."—"I am answer'd, Sir," replied Isabella, "and with a reproach, which, if I am scapable of deserving from you, I must be unfit any longer to remain in your presence."

So saying, she hid her face in her handkerchief, and hastened out of the room to give vent to her agony.

CHAPTER XI.

A pious Mind resorts to Providence for Support.

F E W moments had passed after Isabella left her father, before he felt as much pain from the asperity of the retort he given, as she had experienced in receiving it. Nature could not be long expelled from heart, nor could ill humour take any lasting possession of it. He wished he had not said it; he felt the cruelty, the injustice of writing vengeance on the harmless works of fancy, and, perhaps, he would at this moment have not been sorry, could he have recalled the messenger he had dispatched to Lady Crowbery. Those sensations of regret, which a good mind is capable of, Sir Roger felt; but to confess and atone is the effort of a great mind as well as good, and that was bestowed by nature upon him. Men, who affect the reputation of a decided character, are too apt to mistake obstinacy in error for consistency of opinion; and this was

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Roger's misfortune. Few things could have galled him more than Claypole's conduct, yet his whole life did not furnish so great an instance of weakness, as his pertinacious attachment to that unworthy friend. No hypocrisy is sooner discovered than the pretended generosity of a self-interested man, and opportunities enough had offered themselves to Sir Roger Manstock for developing the real character of Claypole; but the stronger the light was that struck upon him, so much the closer he shut his eyes against it. The veil was now drawn off at once, and prejudice could no longer save him from the conviction of his own mistake. This vexatious discovery was just rankling in his mind, when innocence, unfortunately falling in his way, was made to suffer (as too often happens) for the guilty, who had escaped his resentment.

The next morning brought over Susan May to Manstock House, who was admitted to her lovely mistress to pay her last duty, and take leave. On this occasion, she was led into a diffusive recital of all particulars respecting Henry's late generous proceeding, to which Isabella lent a willing ear. As the one recounted the noble acts of her benefactor, the
heart

heart of the other glowed with delight; his virtues, his sufferings, his magnanimity, his self-denials were enumerated and acknowledged; when the subject of his mental perfections was exhausted, his person, his graceful form, the beauty of his countenance, became the topic of their praise, and on this subject Susan's eloquence seemed animated into warmer phrase and diction than on the former. Whilst this was going on, Isabella's blushes witnessed to the sensibility of soul, which this recital inspired; at last, no longer able to refrain from joining in the praise of one so dear to her, she said, "I perfectly agree with you in every thing you have said, or can say, in commendation of your amiable benefactor. I do not think it is in nature for any human being to be more noble in mind, more charming in person; and I feel no shame in confessing to you, what I have avow'd to my father, that in purity of soul I love him. But alas! alas! I have difficulties to encounter, objections to overcome, and sorrows to endure, that will probably make that a condition of necessity, which you may remember was once my choice, and devote me to a single life."—"Heaven in its mercy forbid!"

forbid!" cried Susan, "that so much beauty and love shou'd be left to pine away in solitariness and disappointment; fathers must have hearts of marble, that can so controul and thwart the virtuous affections of their children."—"Hold," cried Isabella, "you must not talk in that stile, Susan, if you have any value for my friendship; my father must always be spoken of with respect in my hearing; we will therefore change the subject to what we cannot differ about, and you will tell me what you think of Henry's wound: Did he tell you how he came by it?" To this Susan replied, that he had been very reserved upon the subject; but, for her own part, she was certain it had been given him by that desperate creature Fanny Claypole, in the rage of disappointment; "which, indeed," added she, "her own confession puts out of doubt; for my mother told me in secrecy, that when she attended her in her fits and ravings, that and many other things came out, which are almost too bad to relate."—"I don't wish to hear them," replied Isabella, "for things of that sort are perfectly disgusting to me; and, I dare say, if any thing improper pass'd, she herself was in the fault of it."—"So much

I will venture to inform you of," said Susan, "that she was not in the fault that it did not pass; but the truth of the fact is, that the rage of the lady was rous'd by the virtue of the man, and the stab was given him in the fury of revenge and disappointment."—"That I can well believe," replied the blushing fair; "and I own to you, I am glad at my heart that Henry did not demean himself by stooping to her arts; but I wonder what is become of her." To this Susan answered, that she was now with the Lord of Crowbery Castle, where she was treated with great attention, and where she did not doubt but she was playing a very deep and cunning game, and the rather, as she understood that her reverend uncle had made one of the party, and was now upon a visit at the Castle.—"So soon after the departure of my cousin!" cried Isabella, sighing; "that is indeed extraordinary on his part. I understood he had left us, but I did not guess he was gone thither of all places; I am sure my father must have felt that affront very severely."—"I hope it will open his eyes," replied Susan, "for all the neighbours cry out upon Mr. Claypole already." Isabella made some slight obser-

vation

vation upon this, and here the conference ended.

Isabella, now alone, resigned herself to meditation, and after a few minutes so employed, broke out into the following soliloquy:—"Oh Henry! mysterious son of an unhappy mother, little does my father think how nearly thou art allied to him; and though I am now interdicted from all communication with thee, I will still nourish one spark of hope, that thy affection may prevail against appearances, and thou persist to love me, till time shall develope the secret which honour now forbids me to divulge, in spite of all temptations. May providence protect thee in all dangers, and by restoring thy beloved parent to health, crown thy filial undertaking with a happy event! meanwhile, though I will pray for thee in secret, I must remember the promise I have given to my father, and sacredly fulfil it in its strictest sense, without prevarication: this is my duty; but when I reflect what circumstances may occur to shake my constancy, and overpower my nature, I tremble at the task I have engag'd in. Where then shall I find fortitude in the hour of trial, and whither shall I resort, but

to thee, O thou, who art the father of all those that faithfully refer themselves to thy protection? take then, I pray thee, into thy most gracious disposal, my heart and its purposes, too weak without thy strengthening providence, too fallible without thy merciful support."

END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.

BOOK

BOOK THE NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

A short Interlude between the Acts.

WHILST the dramatic author cheers his audience with a tune between the acts, I am forced to fill up my intervals with a treatise, and (what is still worse) with a treatise of my own making, which is not quite the case with his tune. His spectators are regaled with harmony in a brilliant theatre, amidst a blaze of lights; my reader, in his solitary chair, sits moping over the dull strain of an uninteresting dissertation, which probably has little other merit but of putting him to sleep: what inspires his critics with good humour, only stupifies mine.

But if these are his advantages in the periods of suspension, many more and much greater are they, when he returns to the stage and I to my history. The actor before the curtain and the scenist behind it conspire to lift him into fame, almost without any effort of his

own: he is upheld by the charms of spectacle, I am loaded with the drudgery of detail; he has castles in the clouds, that drop down at the word of command, we are forced to labour late and early, till our brains are well nigh beaten into brick and mortar with the slavery of building them. A nimble scene-painter will dash off a cataract in full froth and foam, that will cost us twenty pages of hard pumping, before we can get a single drop to flow: how many pens do we split in conjuring up a storm of thunder and lightning, whilst he, by one mark in the margin of his manuscript, sets all the elements in a roar; we find it a very troublesome job to furnish horses and carriages for the conveyance of our company, his characters are wafted from scene to scene by a whistle; when his heroine is in a crisis, some one cries,—*Hab! she faints!*—and the inimitable Siddons dies away; another cries,—*Hab! she revives!*—the inimitable Siddons is alive again. We cannot do this without salts and hartshorn at the least, and in an obstinate fit, hardly with the help of burnt feathers, an unfavoury experiment he is never driven to.

Let us put the case, that the author of a
novel

novel shall lay his scene in the house of some abandoned strumpet, where a set of cut-throats resort for the plotting of some murderous conspiracy, and let the hero of his story, for whom our pity is to be interested, enlist himself in this gang, and let him introduce a virtuous wife, the darling of his heart, and the faithful partner of his bed, into this house of ill-fame and assembly of villains, there to be left in the hands of these miscreants as a hostage for his good faith, telling her withal, that he is sworn to assassinate her father that very night, who but would cry out against the conduct of such a fable? but let Otway's fascinating muse put this into melodious metre, let the bell toll for execution, bring forth the rack, send the actress on the stage with hair dishevelled, cheeks of chalk, and eyes wildly staring—no matter why so mad at once, nor what she talks of, (be it of *seas of milk* or *ships of amber*)—all hearts bow down to her resistless energy; she takes her poet on her wings, and soars to fame.

Wonderful in all ages, and honoured by all enlightened nations, hath been the actor's magic art; the theatres and forums of Greece were embellished with his statues; they gazed

upon him *like a descended god*; their greatest poets, down to Æschylus and Aristophanes, trod the stage in person: Rome also honoured her actors, and they in return were the grace and ornament of all societies; their sayings were recorded, and collections of their apothegms have come down to our times; Cæsar in all his power made suite to them, and even knights of Rome did not revolt from the profession. It remained for modern times to complete their triumphs, by admitting female candidates into the lists; from that moment Nature took possession of her rights; the finest feelings were consigned to the fairest forms; the very Muse herself appeared in her own sex and person: beauty, that gives being to the poet's rapturous vision, a voice that guides his language to the heart, smiles that enchant, tears that dissolve us, with looks that fascinate, and dying plaintive tones that sink into the soul, are now the appropriate and exclusive attributes of that all-conquering sex; in short, they bind our nobles in chains, and our princes in links.—of love.

C H A P T E R II.

An Adventure on board a Frigate.

WE now return to our hero, who, with fair weather and favouring gales, was far advanced upon his voyage. A few, and but slight sensations of uneasiness had attended his initiation on ship-board. Cary's gay and gallant spirit cheered him at all moments; the novelty of the scene, the succession of adventures which occurred to him in passing through the Channel, and the striking characters of British seamen, for ever in his view, were to a mind like his most interesting contemplations. The cleanliness, good order, and discipline of Cary's frigate were exemplary; and as she had cleared the Channel, and was upon the sharp look-out for an enemy, expectation kept every body alert, and in a state of warlike preparation.

Tom Weevil was a lively thoughtless fellow, and had passed through all the discipline of being seized up to the shrouds, and every other species of sea-jokes practised upon fresh-water novices, with perfect good-humour. He had

made acquaintance with several gentlemen of easy address, particularly in the foretop, with the captain of which, Jack Jones by name, he had established a sworn friendship; and as Tom was very fond of taking the air on that elevated station where Jack presided, he was mostly to be found in the aforesaid top, where, in leisure hours, he edified his company with reading (a gift which he alone possessed) the illustrious history of Robinson Crusoe, to which all ears were open, and universal faith from all parties subscribed without reserve. Happy would it be for congregations in general were they so attentive to their preacher as Tom's audience were to him: they were also able commentators upon many parts of the work; but as they did not always concur in the same explanations and remarks, the progress of the history was liable to considerable interruptions and chasms, whilst the interlocutory parts were filled up with oaths and lies, given and taken very liberally in the true spirit of controversy.

Mr. William Williams, the surgeon (or, in the sea phrase, the doctor) had so ably conducted the cure of Henry's wound, by adding nothing to nature's operations but cleanliness
and

and fresh lint, that his arm was come to its perfect use, and, it may be presumed, his spirit was not unwilling to try its strength upon the enemies of his country, if they came in his way. It was now early morning, and that wished-for opportunity was in near approach: Henry was on deck, enjoying that most magnificent of all spectacles, the sun rising over the waters, a rayless globe of fire; his heart expanded at the sight, and his thoughts ascended towards the Creator of those wonders he contemplated. Captain Cary was at present under easy sail, and the weather fine, when the man at the mast-head descried a sail a-head: instantly the officer on watch informed the Captain, who, leaping out of his cot, huddled on his clothes, and in little more time than a lion would bestow upon his toilet, presented himself on the quarter-deck, having ordered all hands up, and sail to be made. A very little time discovered her to be a square-rigged vessel, and as she kept her course towards Cary, with the wind in her favour, she was soon visible from the deck, where every glass in the ship was directed towards her, and every voice pronounced her to be a frigate of equal or superior force to their own; and, upon a nearer

view, from certain marks, which experienced seamen are quick in discerning, she was adjudged, without one dissenting voice, to be an enemy, and an enemy, it should seem, that did not decline an action.

Now began that awful arrangement in which silence still as death prevailed, and every thing moved at the word of one man, whose voice, and none other, was heard, and to whose command absolute obedience followed on the instant. Henry surveyed the whole with silent awe, and reverence for a service so conducted: his heart glowed with love and pride for his friend, whom situation seemed now to have transformed into a new creature; that countenance, which hitherto he had only seen charactered with the mirthful smile of raillery and frolic, was now terrible and frowning, as he bent his eye upon the enemy, in the same act of preparation with himself. He was a perfect hero arming for battle, courage tempered with deliberate circumspection marked every word he said, which were distinctly and precisely given out in orders to every officer in the ship; the lieutenants repaired to their quarters, the men assembled in the tops, and honest Weevil was honoured
with

with a post at one of the cabin-guns, in company with eight other brave fellows. Cary, having hoisted his colours, addressed himself to his men in a short but animating speech; that in language suited to their habits and apprehensions gave them to understand, that whilst he had breath in his body those colours were never to come down; that the advantage of the few guns the enemy had over them was to be compensated by superior skill and courage, and he was resolved that republican frigate should either follow him into a British port or sink alongside of him. This was followed by three cheers; when, turning to Henry, he said, "Now, my brave Henry, if you like the sport, we will give you a taste of it; this fellow seems to have some stomach for fighting, but no great management in bringing it to bear: I see he means to fight us on the starboard side, and has arm'd himself accordingly; but I shall baulk his fancy, and take him where he is not prepar'd." This said, he gave the word, helm-a-weather, and by a rapid manœuvre well executed, brought his frigate on the other side, pouring in a raking fire as he sheered across him. This manœuvre produced much

confusion and some loss to the enemy, who are in the practice of arming only on one side. The position Cary had taken, and the rapidity of his fire, had great effect, as the action was close. When the enemy had recovered from his surprise, his behaviour was perfectly gallant; and by something giving way on board the British frigate, she became unmanageable, and fell broadside to upon the Frenchman; part of the crew being occupied in repairing this accident, the enemy seized the opportunity for boarding, being full of men. Henry now felt his spirit called upon in a manner not to be resisted; a confused and scrambling fight took place upon the gang-way, where the French had lodged themselves in some numbers, under conduct of a spirited officer, whom Henry immediately singled out as his man; he flew to the scene of action sword in hand, shouting to the people as he advanced, and at the very first stroke brought down the leader of the boarding crew, who fell dead into the waste. Animated by his example, the defendants became invincible, and repulse and slaughter ensued: the few that escaped back to their ship were instantly followed by the victorious party, Henry being

ing one of the first, if not the very first, that leapt on board the national frigate; there was no leader like him to rally the fugitives; in the first fury of the onset the carnage was indiscriminate, till a general cry for quarter recalled that mercy which is never long absent from the hearts of our countrymen, and stopt the hand of death. The colours were hauled down, and three cheers from the conquerors gave notice to their gallant captain and comrades alongside of them, that they were in possession of their prize. A crowd gathered round Henry, who, like Achilles bathed in the blood of Hector, stood in the midst of them tremendously beautiful: he had thrown off his coat before he entered into action, his hat had been beaten off, and his hair, Medusa like, fell in wild disorder on his forehead, his eyes seemed on fire, the frown yet dwelt upon his brow, and the angry spot of crimson hue still burnt upon his cheek. A confusion of voices now arose, all applauding their young volunteer, with many huggings, and squeezings, and slappings on the back, garnished with oaths of the most unaccountable variety, which, through an excess of good-will, blasted every limb in the company, and sent our hero himself

self to the devil by a thousand different conveyances. Amongst these vociferous admirers his eye singled out a figure in the outward row, whom he discovered to be his friend Tom Weevil, in spite of a small alteration in his countenance, occasioned by the removal of one ear and part of a cheek out of their place, and dangling upon his shoulder by the help of certain fibres which still restrained them from total separation. Henry flew to his wounded friend, compressed the fleshy fragments into their place as well as he could, and taking off his neckcloth, bound them up, and hurried him away to Doctor Williams, whom he found in the cockpit stript to his shirt, with his sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, and bathed in a mingled stream of blood and sweat. "When you can turn your hand," cried Henry, "to a brave lad, who wants a little of your art, I shall be oblig'd to you." A foretop man, one of Weevil's audience, was then under Williams's hands, who seemed in a most hopeless case. "It's all up with me," cried the dying sailor; "death has stopt my grog for everlasting; therefore, do you see, Doctor, never break your head about me, but turn your hand to the lad, splice his chops, and send him going."

going." The heroism of this expiring warrior, the scene of human misery which the cockpit presented, and the gory figure of Williams himself, were too much for the unhardened nerves of Henry—the tears started from his eyes. The dying man was still anxious for the glory of his country, and demanded to know what had been the event of the fight. When Henry had informed him of this, life seemed to reinspire his half-closed eyes, a gleam of joy flitted over his distorted visage; "Oh! that I cou'd have one peep at the prize," he exclaimed, "before my daylight's are out."—"So thou shalt," exclaimed Jack Jones, who was standing over him, "if the brave volunteer will condescend to bear a hand."—"If I was an admiral," replied our hero, "I shou'd be honour'd by the office;" and having so said, taking up one end of the hammock on which the dying man was stretched, and Jones taking the other, they carried him up the ladder, and placed him where, with the prize in his view, he breathed out his gallant spirit in the arms of victory.

CHAPTER III.

Our Hero makes an interesting Discovery.

WHEN our hero had performed the last offices to the dying sailor, he went upon the quarter-deck, where Captain Cary was busily occupied in giving orders upon various matters. The first moment he could detach himself from business, he ran to Henry, and throwing his arms about him, overwhelmed him with applauses: great was their mutual joy to find that neither had received the slightest hurt; but what a change did it appear to Henry, as he cast his eyes about the frigate, late in such beautiful and perfect trim, now exhibiting nothing but a pent-house of dangling rags and mangled rigging over head, and below, a chaos of broken booms, shattered boats, and decks floated with water black as Styx with the scattering of the powder. When Cary had devoted a few moments to his gallant friend, he called the first lieutenant to him, and shaking him cordially by the hand, gave him joy of his prize; "Go, my brave fellow," he cried, "and take possession

cession of that noble frigate, which your valour and good conduct has contributed to conquer ; and you, volunteer," added he, addressing himself to Henry, "go with your officer, and board her for the second time ; but here," pointing to his coat, that laid under the barricade, " slip on your-clothes, and get a hat." He then gave directions for shifting the prisoners, and that proper care should be had of the wounded men, by superintending the treatment they received from their own surgeons : and now began the carpenter's and boatswain's reports, with a long train of various duties, that fall to the share of every one in Cary's situation, and which none were better qualified to execute than he was.

When the first lieutenant, accompanied by our hero, came on board the prize, he found the crew and passengers of a Lisbon packet, which she had captured in her cruize, and of these he bade Henry take charge, whilst he gave attention to more pressing matters. Henry, now acting under orders, immediately began to exert his delegated authority, by assembling his countrymen from all parts of the vessel, for the joyful purpose of restoring them to their liberty. When he was about to embark them in the
boat,

boat, that waited to receive them, under the command of Lord Frederick, our young midshipman heretofore described, one of the company informed him, there was a sick gentleman in his hammock below, whose state of health required instant attention. To this person Henry immediately went, with one of the party for a guide, who brought him to the cable-tier, where the sick gentleman was lying in his hammock, attended by two servants. When our hero had imparted to him the cheering purpose of his visit, and recommended a speedy removal on board the British frigate, where he would be better accommodated, he answered, in a faint tone, that it would be a most welcome release; he had been tortured with noise and clamour, and, at the same time, nearly suffocated with heat and stench; "but surely," added he, "I have heard that voice before, tho' I cannot discern your countenance in this dark place. Is it possible, Sir, that you and I can have met at Crowbery?" A short explanation now took place, which, to Henry's great and joyful surprise, convinced him that Providence had directed him to the rescue of his father. Difficult though it was to suppress his emotion

tion on such a discovery, yet he had command enough over himself to check his tongue, and immediately began his operations for removing him from his loathsome abode, all which he planned and executed with the tenderest care and attention. The refreshing sensation of air and motion revived the spirits of the redeemed prisoner; he was lifted into the boat in his bedding; Henry's eye watched every movement that could annoy him, Henry's arm supported him through every moment of the passage, and his care superintended the operation of getting him on board, where he instantly assigned him his own cot, and recommended him, in the strongest terms, to his friend Williams.

So reformed was the appearance of Cary's frigate, that it appeared to Henry as the work of magic; but what cannot British seamen, well commanded, perform? She was now once more in sailing trim, her decks washed, and her lumber stowed away. Henry delivered up his redeemed prisoners, with a list of their names, to the captain; and, having executed these instructions, demanded if there were any further commands for him? "Nothing."

thing, at present; but to refresh yourself in the cabin," replied Cary, "where you will find cold meat and wine, and some of the national officers at work upon it." Thither our exhausted hero eagerly repaired; and, as he was mixing with the prisoners, he heard one of them relating a circumstance of an English deserter, who, being mutinous at his gun in the time of action, and refusing to serve it against his countrymen, had been run through the back by one of the officers on the spot. This was told in French, which Henry had enough of the language to understand, and, in the same language, made shift to enquire the name of the renegado. This the Frenchman did not know; but he learnt enough of his station and description in the ship to guide him in the enquiries which his humanity towards a fellow-creature, under such circumstances, inspired him to make. He therefore snatched a hasty morsel, took a refreshing draught of wine, and jumped into the boat, that was just then going off to the prize. Here he soon traced his enquiries to the wretched object he was in search of, and in whom there appeared so much to pity and condemn. He found him stretched at
his

his length upon the bare deck, beside the gun he had been posted at, incapable of raising himself up, floated with his own blood; and at the point of death. Judge, reader, what was Henry's sensation, when, in this expiring wretch, he recognized the features of his acquaintance Bowfey. "Ah! miserable man," he cried, "is this your fate at last? Do you not know me? Speak to me, if you have strength to utter; look on me, if you can lift your eyes, and I will yet give you the last comfort of knowing that your victim, Thomas Weevil, survives the blow you dealt him."—"Good Lord, good Lord," murmured the expiring man; "Weevil is alive, then I am no murderer: I know you, Mr. Henry; you are a good man; I wish I had taken your good counsel, then I had never been in these damn'd fellows' hands; I am dying, I am dying; I wou'd not fight against my country; tho' bad enough in all reason, I was not such a shabby rascal as that came to, so a scoundrel thrust his sword into my back, (the devil reward him for it!) and here I've lain ever since." Henry saw the agonies of death upon him; he grew convulsed at times, then brought out a few words, and seemed struggling to reach out his

his hand, which Henry no sooner perceived, than stooping down, he took him by the hand, saying, "Farewel, the Lord have mercy upon you and forgive you." This was understood by Bowsey, who, deeply groaning, muttered something, of which Henry could make out no more than, *Sleep, sleep—they say it is all sleep.*—"They are liars and blasphemers," exclaimed Henry, and was proceeding, when he perceived the senses he addressed were closed, the last breath was spent, and the soul had taken flight to those unknown regions, where all who credit or inculcate these impious doctrines, will be destined to experience a terrible confutation of their *eternal sleep*.

CHAPTER IV.

First Love strikes deep.

WHEN Captain Cary had taken into consideration the state of his prize, (a large forty gun frigate) the number of his prisoners, and various other circumstances, which made a separation unadvisable, he determined to avail himself of a fair wind, and his proximity to the coast, for conveying her into

into the first English port he cou'd make, though his own destination was for the Tagus; he therefore made known this his resolution to his officers in each ship, and steered for the channel; the wind continued to serve, and he pushed into Falmouth, as the first port that was favourable to his purpose.

Here Henry landed with his father, who still concealed himself under the name of Smith. The ships took the first occasion for proceeding to Plymouth, where they could receive the necessary repair, whilst Henry staid with his two convalescents at Falmouth, for Tom Weevil's wound, was now, by Williams's skill, far advanced towards a cure. The last conversation that Henry held with Williams was on the evening preceding the departure of the ships, when with some difficulty he prevailed upon him to accept a suitable present for his great attention to his own and Weevil's wounds: Mr. Smith, so called, had rewarded him in a more magnificent stile, according to the customs of the East. In this conversation Williams, whose modesty had seldom permitted him to speak of himself and his own adventures, was enticed into a more circumstantial detail of past occurrences, which it imports

imports not this history to record in any other period, than that in which he was employed as an assistant to our acquaintance Zachary Cawdle at Crowbery, where the youthful charms of Susan May, then in their first blossom, made sad havock with Williams's susceptible heart. It did not appear, even from his own modest account, that Susan was altogether inexorable, for Williams was a very handsome fellow, with a thousand good qualities, and, over all, one of the sweetest tempers man ever possessed, but there were rubs innumerable, which fortune perversely threw in the way of his passion that Williams had not skill or confidence to struggle with: the chief of these had root in Jemima's jealousy and spite, some sprung from honest Zachary himself, who thought love no great recommendation in a compounder of medicines; and others were thrown in his way by the collusion of Blachford with Dame Jemima, the bright eyes of the damsel having set fire to the bilious particles of the Justice's blood in no less degree than to the milky ones of Williams. To extricate himself from this dilemma by deliberate means required more nerves than Williams had to spare, he therefore

fore took quicker but less regular measures, and fairly escaped by flight, taking nothing away with him but an aching heart, and defrauding his master of no one tittle of his right, save only of the pleasure of paying him certain running arrears of wages, which Williams probably had neither time nor inclination to demand.

When Williams had concluded his narrative, Henry resolved first to try the pulse of his affection, before he threw the lure of Susan's fortune in his way, and this he rightly conceived to be the most honourable proceeding to both parties. He therefore began to discourse with him in such a way as might best discover how far Susan still kept any hold upon the heart of her first lover, and when this was made clear to him, he proceeded to unfold the dark transaction which Blachford had been concerned in, and the consequences it had produced. Here Williams, no longer able to restrain himself, broke out into violent denunciations against her betrayer, taking Heaven to witness, that whenever opportunity should serve, he would have his revenge upon him for what he had done; but this Henry soon put a stop to, by informing

him how completely the offender was now out of his reach. "It is an exit too good for such a villain," cried Williams, "he shou'd have died by the halter, or, if the law cou'd not have reach'd him, my arm shou'd; but though his life is out of my reach, his memory is not, and I will vindicate the innocent against the guilty, by making public the truth, and sharing my last shilling in support of my poor girl, wherever she can be found, and to whatever situation she may be reduc'd."—"That is a resolution," said Henry, "every way worthy of you, and bespeaks a generous soul; it also convinces me that you lov'd her honourably, and esteem'd her worthy of your love."—"And she is worthy still," rejoined he. "Can I love her less because she has suffer'd wrong and violence from the blackest wretch that ever breath'd? No, I shou'd be base as he is if I cou'd; but I am impatient to know what has been her fate, and how she has struggled under misery so complicated." This drew out that account, which no relater but one of Henry's delicacy of sentiment would have reserved for the conclusion of his story; and though it may be well believed the facts now recounted were not
I embellished

ellished with any self-encomiums, yet the best colour he could give to truth could prevent his hearer from receiving it with transports of admiration and gratitude.—“ Oh vens!” cried Williams, “ what a soul is this? And have you risked a life so precious in voluntary combat with those madmen? Heavens! be prais’d, the villains have not drawn a drop of blood from your veins! well might we conquer, who were headed by an angel.”—“ Stop,” cried Henry; “ we will use common sense, if you please, and treat all other like rational creatures. I have been telling you mere matter of fact, and as you seem to take a warm share in our friend’s interest, so far my story has repaid you for the pains it gave you in some parts, by the pleasure you receive in the conclusion of it. When your duty permits, and your inclination disposes you to make a trip to Crow-ley, you will find your old acquaintance respectably establish’d; and if you see her with your own eyes, and judge of her as I think you will, I persuade myself you will find no one more virtuous of person, or good quality of heart, than she is now air’d by what has pass’d since you lost sight of her: and now a thought strikes me,

Mr. Williams, as a hint for you to turn in your mind, which is simply this; your old friend Zachary Cawdle is now from home upon a service, which, I have reason to believe, will set him free from business for the rest of his days; shou'd this be the case, and if you prefer a stationary employ to a roving one like your present, it is not improbable but means may be taken for settling you in his business, if the spot is agreeable to you, and the object worth your thoughts." To this Williams answered, that the situation indeed would be very desirable; but he doubted his capacity of obtaining it, for he had no money, nor was in the way of getting any.— "Then I perceive," quoth Henry, "my good friend, you have no present thoughts of marrying." Williams blushed and was silent. Henry smiled, and shaking him by the hand, bade him be of good courage, telling him that it was probable he should have an opportunity of talking with Zachary before long, and that he would find means to inform him of the result of their conversation.

CHAPTER V.

Our Hero quits the Sea.

THE next day Captain Cary took his departure for Plymouth, carrying his prize with him. Some time would be necessary for repairing the damages his frigate had received in the action, and this determined Henry to stay at Falmouth, not only for the purpose of attending upon his father, but in the hope of hearing some tidings of Lady Crowbery, whose arrival might now be looked for from day to day. Mr. Smith had taken lodgings in a private house, and was recovering his strength apace: to him Henry repaired, after his conversation with Williams above related, and found a chaise waiting at his door for a morning airing. His tender attentions had so won the heart of his unconscious father, that he seemed to live only in his company, and as this airing was a first effort, Henry offered to attend upon him in the carriage, which was most thankfully accepted. The driver was directed to chuse

the smoothest road, and go gently along; the sick man's spirits were revived by the air and motion, and now for the first time he found strength to converse more at large, than as yet he had been able to do.—“Your goodness to me, dear sir,” said he, “has been such as I can never find words to express my sense of: I have hitherto been silent, not through want of gratitude but want of powers to give utterance to it; yet I have much to say to you, some things to explain, and others to apologize for. In the first place I shou'd tell you, that in all our casual rencounters, since the first time we met, when I pretended to have pick'd up a ring of Lady Crowbery's, I have been imposing myself upon you under a feign'd name and character: I am the third son now living of the Lord Pendennis, my name Henry Delapoer; a very early attachment to the loveliest of her sex being most unfortunately traversed by her father decided my fate, and hurried me to the East Indies, with a broken heart, upon a desperate adventure. It was the will of providence I shou'd survive my loss of happiness, by turning aside from me in various ways, almost miraculous, that death which I presumptuously courted.

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As my heart never varied from its first affection, I never have had a thought of marrying; and though I have been little studious of accumulating money, yet circumstances, unsought for on my part, have thrown a fortune upon me, which, though not to be compar'd with many, is an affluent one, and, which is better, fairly earn'd, without cruelty or extortion. Having now disclos'd to you who I am, I shall next inform you of my purpose in setting out for Lisbon, in which undertaking I suspect it will be found that we have both the same object, namely, that of tendering our last melancholy offices to the much injured lady of that execrable tyrant Crowbery; of your motives, my dear Sir, I know no more than common report has given out, and they do credit to your gratitude, for I have heard she has been a beneficent and kind friend to you, and I cannot doubt but she has acted on the purest principles; how it comes to pass that I am so affected by her situation, and enrag'd against her oppressor, a single word will explain, when I tell you she was all but my wedded wife, when her inexorable father overtook us, in the last stage of our progress towards Gretna Green, and obstinately sever'd

that knot which a very few hours wou'd have made indissoluble. Merciful Heaven! what a heart-rending moment was that, which tore me from the arms of my Cecilia! Oh! Sir, it was attended with such aggravating horrors! Figure to yourself the circumstance most killing to the heart of honour, and that case was our's. What might have been the result of it I can well conceive; what it was Heaven only knows; for I was hurried out of England, and remain'd in ignorance of her fate; and now I find her wedded to a brute, childless, unhappy, and alas! far gone in a decay. If providence shall graciously permit her to survive her voyage, Lisbon gives me one last chance of meeting her on this side Heaven; if not, the short remnant of days that may be left to me shall be spent in bewailing her loss, and, if opportunity can be found, in avenging her wrongs."

Here the father ceased, exhausted not less by the agitation of his mind, than by the exertion of his discourse; a short silence took place, which Henry was too considerate of his repose to interrupt; at length perceiving that he expected a reply, he spoke as follows,—
"I am greatly honour'd by the confidence
you

you repose in me, and it gives me the highest satisfaction to know, that my small services have been useful to you in any degree : I was certainly well prepared for the discovery you have been pleas'd to make, for it has long been out of doubt with me, that your first assum'd condition was not your real one ; the manners, character, and deportment of a man of birth and education cannot easily be disguis'd, and your's least of all. I am not totally uninformed of Lady Crowbery's early attachment to the honourable Captain Delapoor, my life from infancy to a period not long pass'd having been spent under the care and tuition of a most intimate friend of her's, the Reverend Mr. Ratcliffe, lately deceas'd ; by that excellent man I was receiv'd as a deserted nameless infant, deposited at his door, and recommended to his benevolent protection by my mysterious mother. Through some secret channel, unknown to me, the charges of my maintenance were supplied, when at his death they stopt at once, and I was thrown friendless and helpless on the world at large. Misfortunes, which at some other time I will detail to you, fell upon me, pressing me down to the extremity of human

misery and distress; in this state the charity of Lady Crowbery found me; her bounty to me drew the malice of her tyrant into open acts of oppression, loading her with calumny most gross and injurious, and racking her too sensitive feelings, till her tender frame gave way, and sunk under the attack; it is to me, therefore, belongs the punishment of that monster, for it is I who have been made the plea and apology for his abominable cruelty. Her death, which Heaven avert, wou'd set my hands at liberty, and as I have an auspicious impression on my mind that time will shortly reveal the present mystery of my birth, I may then be in possession of a name cowardice cannot shrink from; and when his pride can no longer shelter itself in the obscurity of my person, his cunning will no longer be able to evade the terror of my appeal. Here then you see the motives of my journey to Lisbon, and rightly suggest that they are in some respects congenial with your own. Undiminished affection on your part, and ardent gratitude on mine, attract us to the same point; and this being the case, I shou'd humbly conceive it will be our mutual wish to wait her arrival in this port, and, if she has no objection,

tion, to embark with her in the same packet, if your health serves for the undertaking."

"You speak my wishes correctly," replied the father; "and as for my health, it is so secondary an object, compared to her's, that I do not suffer it to occupy a single thought." As these words were uttering, a chaise came in sight, followed by another, and by two servants on horseback. Henry started at the sight, and exclaimed, "My God! here is the very lady herself." Then calling to the postilion to stop, he hastily opened the door of the chaise, and leaping out, planted himself by the side of the road, which it was necessary for the approaching carriages to take.

Henry, though greatly agitated, was not wanting in sufficient presence of mind to be cautious in his mode of stopping Lady Crowthery's carriage, which he did as gently and as silently as he could contrive. When he presented himself at the window, the exhausted traveller had raised herself up to enquire into the cause of the stop, when immediately as her eyes lighted on the face of her son, the blood rushed into her faded cheeks, and she exclaimed—"My Henry! my Henry! is it possible?" and was proceeding; when, to save her from unseason-

able exertions, he told his story in as words as possible, omitting for the present the circumstance of his meeting with his father, who remained in his chaise, drawn out of road at some distance.

He had taken the precaution to secure quiet apartments in a private house, and having directed her drivers to follow his chaise, he left her, and returned to his father, where he found him in great agitation of spirits. It was agreed between them that Henry should prepare Lady Crowbery, before Mr. Delamere attempted to see her; and as soon thereafter as he had entered the town he quitted his chaise, and conducted Lady Crowbery's carriage to the door of the house he had taken for her.

Here she alighted, and between Henry and Doctor Cawdle was conducted to her apartment, which, presenting her with a fine view of the sea, and being both in point of air and interior accommodations much to her liking, seemed to have the effect of reviving her spirits, exhilarated no doubt by the presence above all others, of her beloved Henry.

Honest Zachary, little less delighted with his patient at this unexpected meeting,

let out the circumstance, hitherto suppressed by Henry, of the action Cary had had, which he had picked up by report upon the road, but prudently forbore to speak of. This forced our hero upon a narrative of the whole affair, in which he took not the glory to himself that was due, but in all other particulars was a very correct relater of facts. Zachary now began his journal, and travelled very circumstantially from London to Falmouth, commenting upon his own sagacious proceedings by the way, to which he very justly ascribed the success that had hitherto crowned his operations; and certain it was, the health and strength of the lady did not appear, to Henry's observation, to have suffered much, if any, diminution by the journey. A restorative was now administered, on which Zachary descanted with much learning, and at the same time pronounced, that a repose of some days would be indispensable for her Ladyship's safety, before she embarked on board the packet. A fresh supply of certain drugs being wanted, he sallied forth in search of a proper shop, from whence to replenish his stock. As soon as he was gone, the mother being left with her son, threw her arms about his neck,

and

and gave full vent to those exquisite sensations which nature and affection, hitherto repressed, had implanted in her soul. Moments so free and mutually delicious they had never yet enjoyed; they exchanged embraces and mingled tears, till Henry, recollecting that even joy may be too violent, gently extricated himself from her embrace, rose from her feet where he was kneeling, and having seated himself at her side, clasping one of her hands in his, she began a conversation, which will be recorded in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Friends long divided meet at last.

“ I HAVE receiv’d a letter,” said the Lady Crowbery, “ from my uncle Manstock, which occasion’d me to make a longer stay in London than I should else have made; it oblig’d me to send down my lawyer, to receive from his hands the packet containing my will and other papers, which I had deposited with him. What particular reasons he had for declining a trust, that he had willingly

singly accepted, is matter of conjecture only; but I suppose they proceed from some suspicion entertain'd of your attachment to Isabellâ, and her's to you, for which he is probably indebted to the kind suggestions of his friend Mr. Claypole, from whose resentment, upon being refus'd the living of our lamented Ratcliffe, I have every thing malicious to expect. If, then, my uncle will surrender up his understanding to that unworthy guide, can I help it? I have appointed my executor, and shall put into your hands a copy of my will, with full directions where to apply for the original, which I have lodg'd with Mr. G——, of Gray's Inn, a man in whose integrity the most sacred trust may be repos'd. But how far this change of opinion in Sir Roger Manstock may affect his amiable daughter is a question of very serious concern; for, if I understand his letter rightly, you are put under absolute proscription; nor do I expect she will be allow'd to correspond with me, unless my letters are submitted to inspection before they reach her hands; and as for her writing to me, I do not suppose she will be suffer'd to do it on any account; you see, therefore, in what light you stand; and, ac-

cording

cording to your own feelings, must either prepare yourself for mortification and disappointment, if you persist in thinking of her; or, if you can let your judgment over-rule your passion, you will divert your thoughts from a pursuit that now seems hopeless; for to attempt at detaching Isabella from the strict observance of her father's commands is an undertaking as impracticable as it wou'd be dishonourable."

"That is an attempt," replied Henry; "I shall never make; for that wou'd be to ruin myself both in her esteem and my own. Interdicted by her father, I am excluded from all hope; at the same time, if I know my own heart, I know that time can work no change in its affections; and if I am totally to despair of Isabella, so long as it shall please Heaven to impose upon a wretched creature life bereft of all happiness, so long I shall, with all the resignation that becomes me, endure the dispensation; for it is not my nature to rebel against my Creator."

"I perceive," said the mother, "that your love, my dear Henry, lies deep, and is immoveable; hasty passions waste themselves in vehement asseverations; the flame burns
out,

out, and there's an end to them, but your's is fixt deliberate approbation, therefore I shall not argue against it; on the contrary, I must confess to you, that before I parted from Isabella, I confided to her the secret of your birth; I own'd myself your mother, and disclos'd to her the whole purport of those papers, which I deposited with her father, to be opened only on the event of my decease. She knows you, therefore, for the son of Delapoer, the heir of my estate, and, perhaps, of his fortune, if he has returned, as I am inform'd, without connections, and in affluent circumstances. In her heart, therefore, I shou'd flatter myself you will keep your place, unless my uncle shou'd extort from her any promise to your absolute exclusion. In the mean time, I cou'd wish, before I die, to obtain, if possible, an interview with your father, who is unconscious of your existence, and which might have taken place but for the provoking oversight of honest Cawdle, who forgot to give you my note with the ring. Whilst I was in London, I caus'd enquiry to be made after Delapoer; I was inform'd he remained unmarried, had preserv'd an excellent character, and brought home a respect-

able

able fortune, very honourably acquir'd; he was 'not in town, nor was it exactly known where he was gone, for he had neither house nor servants in London, and the report was, that he was going out of England for the winter, to a warmer climate. It occurs to me, therefore, that if he has heard of my being order'd to Lisbon, he may possibly make that his point."

"And shou'd you be well pleas'd if it was so?" demanded Henry.—"I confess to you, I shou'd not be sorry," replied the lady, "for the reasons I have already stated."—"Then I may venture to inform you," said Henry, "that he was with me in the chaise when I met you on the road." At these words the blood rushed into the cheeks of the feeble invalid, her eyes sparkled with joy, and she exclaimed with unusual energy, "How wonderful are the ways of Providence! What an unexpected blessing, that I am now permitted to be a happy instrument of a discovery like this! Let me see him without loss of time; let me not postpone, even for an hour, a duty so important, an opportunity so graciously offered. I take for granted, you have not declared yourself to him." He assured her he had not.

not. "Then run for him," she cried; "bring him to me this instant; nature struggles at my heart, and will not be restrain'd."

Henry was gone whilst the words were on her lips: she immediately gave orders to her servants to prevent interruption, and then began to collect her thoughts for the awful interview. Whilst she reflected on the extraordinary combination of events that had brought about this unexpected meeting, it inspired her to hope, that Heaven had sealed her pardon for the past offences of her youth, and brought her sufferings to a period. When she endeavoured to put her thoughts into some form of words, and prepare for the discovery she had to make, she found herself incapable of arranging her ideas, and gave up the attempt. "It is in vain," she cried, "to meditate on what I am to say; I must leave it to nature and the impulse of the moment." And now the voice of Henry in the house warned her of his approach; and soon she heard the steps of two men upon the stairs; when the door being opened, presented to her view the sickly and emaciated form of Delapoer, leaning on the arm of his conductor, trembling as he advanced towards her, and panting for breath
through

through faintness and agitation. Henry instantly retired: not a word was uttered by either of the parties; she made an effort to raise herself from her seat, but sunk back, and, putting her hands before her face, burst into tears. There was a chair beside her, in which Delapoeer sat down. "How shall I express my thanks to you," he said, after a short pause, "for this indulgence? Providence seems to have brought us together, by the most extraordinary means, in the last scene of our life's sad tragedy, that we may once more exchange a parting look upon the ruins of time before we separate to our unchangeable destinations. Your lot, my ever-beloved lady, I am persuaded will be blest; you have labour'd much, and will reap abundantly. I snatch'd a sight of you at Crowbery; it was too much for an exhausted frame; I have been sinking ever since; for I heard you was unhappy, and my heart rose against your tyrant, tho' discretion stopt my hand. I pass'd several days about the purlieus of your castle, disguising both my name and habit, lest I might awaken the suspicion of your gaoler: I met that excellent young man, who accompany'd me hither, and sent you a pledge by
his

his hands, which I thought you wou'd understand as a token I was yet alive. Ever since the inexorable decree that tore us from each other, I have been struggling with my hard fortune, in the hope of earning, by my sword and services, a competency to enable me to return an independent man; but alas! a variety of crosses and misfortunes bore so strong upon me for a course of eighteen years, that, until the last few months of my abode in India, I was toiling against the stream of adversity; at length, one lucky expedition, of which I had the conduct, presented to me the alternative of enormous plunder with a guilty conscience, or moderate earnings with a clear one; I chose the latter, and am now return'd, affluent in circumstances, and, I thank God, irreproachable in character. Never, during this tedious period, did the eye of beauty, Indian or English, draw aside one thought, one wish, one, even the slightest, regard, from the center where first love, and the memory of my ever-ador'd Cecilia, had fixt it for life. The vow that I had made, so seal'd, so sanctify'd, so rivetted into the very heart of honour, was to me a marriage vow—but, I perceive, I give you pain; let me not do that; my expressions,

pressions, tho' strong, were only binding on myself; you was not free; you had a father, whom you was forc'd to obey, and, I implore you to believe they were not pointed against your proceeding; I can well suppose your marriage with a wretch like Crowbery was a compulsory one."

"It was, indeed," replied she, raising her eyes for the first time, and turning them upon him in the most affecting manner; "it was impos'd upon me, not only as a command, which I cou'd not disobey, but as an atonement for an offence, which I cou'd no other-wise expiate."

"Gracious Heaven!" he exclaimed; "and was my unhappy Cecilia made to atone for an offence, for which I, vile betrayer as I was, am alone responsible? It is I, then, who am the source of all your sorrows; I, to whose unceasing solicitations your kind heart at last reluctantly gave way; I have been the hateful cause of all your sufferings, like the deceiver of our first parents, the father of all evil."

"Not so," rejoined she hastily; "say, rather, you have been the father of my only blessing."

"What

“What do you mean?” he exclaimed, in a tone of impatience and surprise. “Speak to me; I beseech you, without reserve; lead me the straightest way to truth, for you have stir’d a thought within my heart that will not bear evasion or delay. Am I a father? answer me.”

“You are, you are a father,” she replied; “and Henry is your son.”

As she spoke these words, Delapoer’s senses seemed lost in astonishment; he smote his hands together in a transport of joy, gazed upon her eagerly for a while, then cast his eyes to Heaven; his lips moved, but no voice was heard; then throwing himself back in his chair, he seemed lost in meditation, till, roused to sudden recollection, he adjured her, in the most solemn terms, to confirm the truth of what she had told him by an appeal to Heaven.

“I take Heaven to witness,” she replied, “to the truth of what I have said; conscious as I am that the Judge is at the door, in whose presence I must soon appear, I repeat to you, at the peril of my soul, were I capable of deceit, that Henry is your son and mine.”—“I am satisfied,” cried Delapoer; and, dropping on his knees, broke forth into prayers and praises

praises to the Supreme Disposer of all events. She then imparted to him the purport of her will, and briefly related what had passed between her uncle and herself since her departure from Manstock. When he found she had confided the secret to no one but Isabella, except Henry himself and Zachary, who was professionally made privy to it, he paused for some time, and then demanded, why he alone might not stand forth to the world as the father of Henry, without committing her name in any future time. "Let it remain a mystery," he said; "or, at most, a surmise. Why shou'd we give that triumph to the malice of Lord Crowbery? why shou'd we put to shame the family pride of Sir Roger Manstock? I have fortune enough to bestow upon my son; and the first lawyer that is capable of drawing a deed of gift shall secure the reversion of my whole property to him. As for your paternal estate, bequeath it in it's natural course, so that no suspicion rest upon your memory."

"Your suggestion," said the lady, "is truly generous; but it is far too important to be adopted without due reflection: my uncle Manstock has but one child, and she a daughter; she is already superabundantly endow'd; and

and to accumulate estates upon the heiress of that wealthy house, is mere supererogation; unless our Henry, who is master of her affections, was as much in favour with the father."

"Cannot it be left conditionally, upon her marrying Henry?" said Delapoer. — Lady Crowbery shook her head, and remarked, that this would little differ, in appearance to the world, from an absolute bequest to him. "Yet if I cou'd depend," added she, "upon her attachment to Henry, or, rather, I shou'd say, upon her father's consent, all might be well; and my son, thro' her medium, wou'd still be my heir: but there is little reliance on my uncle, whilst he is under influence hostile to my wishes."

"Did you not say," he rejoined, "that Miss Manstock was privy to the secret of our Henry's birth? If so, it is to be presum'd, you have perfect confidence in her honour; you also believe she is attach'd to him, else you wou'd not have trusted her with an unnecessary secret: how then can this young lady, knowing Henry to be your son, act otherwise by your estate than either share it

with him as his wife, or restore it to him as your heir?"

"There is much argument," she replied, "in what you say; and, I believe, more true honour does not exist in a human heart, than in my cousin Isabella's; but, after all, we must talk with Henry." This was the most immediate wish of Delapoer's heart, who was longing to embrace a son justly so dear to him;—and now he recited to Lady Crowbery the whole narrative of the action, dwelling with rapture upon the bravery and humanity of our hero: the sensations it produced in a mother's heart need not be described, and it is well they need not, for I should doubt if they can.

In short, we hold our readers in too much respect to sicken them with our descriptive powers, convinced that there is no incident arising from this history, or any other of the kind, which may not be referred to their feelings in natural language, without those tedious circumlocutory embellishments, which only serve to load the page. I trust they will not think the worse of my females, if they are not drowned in floods of tears upon every occasion, or fall

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into

into fainting fits with excess of sensibility ; for to such as are pleased with these tricks we do not write, contented to devote our labours to the friends of nature, and to them alone.

CHAPTER VII.

Our Hero is restored to both his Parents.

OUR readers need not be reminded, that the hero of this history knew Delapoer to be his father before he was called to a conference upon the proposal stated in the preceding chapter. The meeting took place in Lady Crowbery's presence ; and the nameless foundling, whom adversity had so lately crushed, now heard himself acknowledged, and felt the animating pressure of a parental embrace, by turns bestowed upon him, with praises, prayers and blessings, superadded in abundance.

" Son," cried Lady Crowbery, " it has now pleas'd Heaven to let me see this hour, which closes every wish that my fond heart conceiv'd, and blesses me beyond what I have ever merited, or can compute. I have lived

to place you in the protection of a father, I have surviv'd to behold you clasp'd in his embrace; and what can I say—but that the transport is unutterable? A term of life beyond what may suffice to execute the few maternal ties that are yet unfinished, is what I dare not, what I do not pray for. Let us not therefore loiter, for the time is short; let us work while it is day, for darkness and death are at hand. There is a business to be done, upon which I must consult you. My paternal estate is, as you know, in my disposal; it is your's: on whom but on my son can I bestow it?"—"Not so," replied Henry; "bestowing it on me, you avow me as your son, and bequeath your name to detraction and disgrace. Suppose (which Heaven forbid!) Lord Crobbery survives you, what will he say? outrageous insult to your memory will ensue: this may be repell'd, you'll say; but what can be oppos'd to Sir Roger Manstock's discontent? If he will not suffer you to leave a paper in his hands, upon the suspicion only of my name being found in it, how will he resent a will, that is to make me the heir of your estate, to the exclusion of his family?"—"And if Isabella inherits it," said the mother,

ther,

ther, "what then?"—"Then she who best deserves it, has it," replied Henry; "and as no earthly blessing can accrue to me, but what originates with her, you put my fate into her hands, who is the mistress of it, whether you so consider her, or not. To her I am known; by her alone I can be made happy; if I have any interest dear to me upon earth, it is to recommend myself to her thoughts; and, therefore, what can best do that, is best for my interest: let the lovely Isabella then possess what she is entitled to, of which, if any share devolves to me, let her bestow it with herself: I cannot be too rich in fortune's gifts, with Isabella to partake of them; without her I shall be beyond the reach of fortune, nothing can lessen or augment my wretchedness."

"Oh, my dear son," cried Delapoer, "how perfectly you speak my sentiments! I adopt your reasoning, nay, rather, I anticipate it, for it is exactly what I recommended to your beloved mother. I have enough, and all I have is your's."

The business was no further pressed, for the conference had been long, and Lady Crowsberry seemed exhausted: she was silent, but it

was a silence that betokened acquiescence. As the business could not be done to her satisfaction without the presence of her confidential lawyer Mr. G——, who was in possession of papers, which, according to this plan, it behoved her to cancel, she determined to write to him by express, and request him to come down to her, if his business admitted of it, in person, else to dispatch some trusty and sufficient proxy, who might act in his place: the intermediate time was not longer than seemed requisite for her case, which now became more and more doubtful; for Zachary, who began to assume a very pensive aspect, had taken a medical assessor into council, and both joined in pronouncing that unless some favourable and speedy change took place, the project of embarking her for Lisbon must be abandoned. Delapoer and Henry saw these inauspicious symptoms in the same melancholy light, and drew the most desponding conclusions from them. One evening, when they were in anxious expectation of Mr. G——, Henry, perceiving that his mother would be glad to dispense with Zachary's attendance, drew him aside, and, walking down to the beach, began to question him about his patient, expressing
himself

himself as without hope of her recovery, and under momentary terrors of her immediate dissolution. To this Zachary replied, that although he saw that sad event in approach, and, in his own judgment, regarded it as inevitable, yet he conjectured that she would have a gradual and lingering dismissal out of life, without pain or loss of senses; and that no rapid, or immediate, dissolution was to be apprehended. "I hope therefore," added he, "our dear lady will yet find time and capacity to settle her affairs to your satisfaction and advantage, and put you in a situation to propose for the loveliest girl in England, to whom, I perceive, you are very seriously attach'd." No answer being returned to this, he proceeded—"For my own part, I am persuaded there is no love lost between you, as the saying is; and if you have left your heart with Miss Manstock in pledge, you have taken her's away with you in possession; for I am no indifferent physiognomist, and not apt to be out in my conjectures as to the human heart. I had a little private talk with the young lady during our halt at Manstock House; and, I believe, my friend, I did your cause no harm by what I said on that occasion."—"The less

you said, the better," Henry coldly replied. —" Come, come, young gentleman," resumed Zachary, " you are too modest, too diffident ; it is not the first time you have stood in your own light with the ladies : And that puts me in mind of my poor boozy dame, who has now, I suppose, drank up her drink, and sleeps in peace. Alexander Kinloch writes me word, and I have this morning receiv'd his letter, that she is absolutely at death's door. Well ! God's will be done ; I must bear it with christian patience ; *Mors omnibus communis.*" —Here the Doctor took out his handkerchief, and, in conformity to custom upon such occasions, applied it to his eyes ; where, if there had been a tear, no doubt the aforesaid handkerchief would have done its duty, and disposed of it. " But I must prepare myself to expect the worst," added he ; " for if death be at the door, and none but Sawney Kinloch to keep him out, why 'tis natural to conclude, that all is over with my poor dame. To be sure she had her failings, as who has not ? but custom familiariz'd me to them. She certainly made some trips in point of fidelity to my bed, but then she was over-partial to the brandy-bottle, and that accounts for her
incontinence,

incontinence, you know, very naturally. She was a little over-righteous, it must be own'd, and saddled me with the saints rather more than was agreeable; but then her religion was mere hypocrisy, so that I cou'd not quarrel with her on that account. She was something of a termagant, I cannot deny; told a pretty many untruths, and bred a pretty many disturbances in my family; but then she did the same by all her neighbours as by me, so that I had no cause in particular to complain of her; and, upon the whole, have as much reason to regret the loss of my wife, as most husbands have to lament for their's."

"Well, my good master," said Henry smiling, "notwithstanding all these good qualities which you have counted up, I am in hopes you'll bear your loss with tolerable composure, and that your days to come will not pass the less to your content because you have no longer a wife in existence, who answers to the description you have been giving: At least I hope life may be tolerable, tho' you have neither sot, slut, nor shrew in your house, to entertain you: and as the time, I fear, is not far off, when you will have a real friend to lament, I foresee that your professional cares

will not long survive your domestic ones, and in that case you will have to look out for a successor in your business. Shou'd that be the case, and shou'd Alexander Kinloch not be the man that answers to your wishes, I beg you will let me recommend to you a friend of mine, for whose sufficiency, in all respects, I will make myself responsible : the person I speak of is your quondam assistant, Mr. William Williams, at present Surgeon of Captain Carey's frigate, a man very highly to be esteem'd for his private character, and of whose abilities, in every branch of his profession, I am bold to promise, you may be furnish'd with the strongest testimonials."—To this Zachary replied, that he had a very high opinion of Williams, and without hesitation should prefer him to every other proponent, not only in respect to Henry's good wishes for him, but on the score of his own merit : as for the old Scotchman, he protested against him in any other capacity than as a cheap drudge at the mortar, if Williams chose to continue him there, which however he should not be very forward to advise.

This matter being adjusted to Henry's satisfaction, he now perceived a chaise and four
stop

stop at Lady Crowbery's door; and running to it, had the gratification of finding that Mr. G—— himself had complied with that Lady's request, and come down in person. A short conversation with that excellent man soon opened to him a character, in which integrity is so prominent, that nature, in the formation of it, seemed determined so to place her work as that no one should overlook or mistake it. It will suffice therefore to say, that every thing was done, according to the will of the testatrix, which method in business and correctness in form could effect: the same opportunity also served for Mr. Delapoer to make his promised settlement on his son our hero; and this being done, our honest lawyer (and as such we venture to pronounce him one of the worthiest members of the community) returned to his station in life; where we hope he will long abide, to protect the property of his clients, and enliven the society of his friends.

CHAPTER VIII.

A gentle Being drops into the Grave.

A Few days had passed after the departure of Mr. G——, when the Lady Crowbery, perceiving her small remains of strength hourly on the decline, communicated to her friends her total abandonment of all hope of stirring from the spot she was in; at the same time expressing her acquiescence in the call of Providence, and the thankfulness with which she should obey the summons, in the presence of those who were dearest to her in this world. She still found strength, by intervals, to write a farewell letter to her unworthy Lord, also one of a very affectionate cast to her uncle Mansstock, both which she committed to the post: to Isabella she likewise wrote, on a subject more important to her than that of taking leave for life, as it respected the future happiness of her beloved son, and explained (in terms, however, the most delicate) her implied hopes and views in the disposition she had made of her estate; and this letter she put
into.

into Henry's hands, referring it to his discretion in what manner, and at what period, to make use of it.

To Zachary Cawdle she bequeathed an annuity of three hundred pounds a year, chargeable upon her estate, to be paid quarterly and punctually. In small legacies to servants, and charitable donations, a further sum was involved, for which due provision was made, and direction given. Of Henry no mention was to be found in her will; but both to him and his father she gave, with her own hands, several little articles, valuable only as tokens of affection and pledges of remembrance. Every thing that personally belonged to her in Crowbery Castle, of which she had many particulars, were left to the Lord of that mansion; the residue was bequeathed in trust to Sir Roger Manstock, for the use and benefit of Isabella, without entail, and at her free disposal, when she should attain the age of eighteen years, of which there yet remained some months only before her non-age should expire.

Neither her senses nor spirits seemed to yield at the approach of death; every morning she was conveyed from her bed to a couch

in her sitting-room, which had a pleasant view of the sea and shore. Here she was constantly attended by one or both of her beloved friends, whose tender assiduities cheered her to her latest moments; she took particular delight in listening to Delapoer's narrative of his adventures in India, which he contrived to render both interesting and entertaining to her, introducing it at such times only as she seemed to call for it, and in such proportions as might not weary her attention, or too forcibly agitate her feelings.—She also, in her turn, had a story to relate, which, though told with great mitigation towards Lord Crowbery, and with the suppression of many cruel circumstances in his conduct, and sufferings on her part, was not always heard with the temper and patience that she wished to inspire. Delapoer, in spite of all his caution, would sometimes give way to the warmth of his natural character, and once or twice, to her sensible regret, broke forth into menaces and denunciations. These she would, with anxious solicitude, strive to qualify and repress. “If you love me, Delapoer,” she would say, “you will remember my words after death, and not disgrace my memory, or disturb my spirit in the
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the grave, by a revengeful and violent proceeding towards Lord Crowbery. Had he been indulgent and kind to me, how severely would my conscience have reproach'd me! and if, on the contrary, he has been somewhat harsh and ungentle, cannot you recollect enough, both committed and omitted on my part, to extenuate, if not to warrant, his unkindness? You'll say my marriage was a compulsory one—'tis true it was so; but still I was a party, tho' a most unwilling one, in the imposition that was put upon him: in my heart he never cou'd obtain a place; I paid him obedience—I had no more to bestow."

The last conversation of this sort she had with Delapoer was on the evening preceding the day on which she died: she was fervent in prayer that her errors might be pardoned, and, in the most solemn manner, conjured him to conspire with her in atonement, by giving double diligence to the performance of those duties which their joint offence had entailed upon them in the person of their son. Whilst she was thus addressing him, Delapoer, who was supporting her as she sat erect on the couch, perceived a convulsive symptom in the muscles about her mouth, which gave him instant alarm; and the eager look with which
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he pursued his observation, convinced her that some change had happened in her features to occasion it.—“ Ah ! my dear friend,” she said, “ I understand your looks, I am dying ; perhaps I am disfigur’d ; if so, leave me, I implore you ; do not let the last impression of this face, which you once beheld with pleasure, remain upon your memory with disgust and horror. If I am fit to be seen, let me thus expire, supported in your arms ; if not, farewell for ever ; let my servants be call’d, and let me not shock either you or my son with an object so distressing.” As she faintly uttered these words, she put her hands before her face, which Delapoer gently clasped in his, assuring her, that her suspicion was unfounded, and that her features indicated no such symptoms as she apprehended. He soon after rung the bell, when Henry entered hastily, followed by Zachary and two female attendants : Henry threw himself on his knees by the side of her couch, and continued for some minutes enfolded in her arms, in speechless agony ; for he also perceived the change, and saw the hand of death was upon her. A convulsive tremor now seized her whole frame, and she sunk down on her couch insensible, while the Doc-

tor exhorted them to leave her to the care of himself and the women. Through the remainder of the night she dosed with short intervals, in which she appeared to have some degree of recollection, but never uttered a word or seemed to experience a pain; at an early hour of the morning, she drew her last sigh and expired. The father and the son were standing by the side of the bed at that awful moment, and the smile, which love impressed upon her features, as her eyes caught a parting sight of them, before they closed for ever, remained after death, as if to tell the beholders that her soul, unwilling to derange the beautiful frame in which it had been encased, had left its peace behind it, whilst it conveyed itself away to the mansions of immortality and bliss.

CHAPTER IX.

Our History presents a Scene, not very flattering to Human Nature.

WE have now closed the history of the amiable but unhappy Lady Crowbery, and we would fain hope that such of our readers

ders as are parents, will think the moral of her fate not unworthy of their consideration and reflection.

One of the first duties that devolved upon her afflicted friends, was to give information of the mournful event, to her absent connections. This business was undertaken by Doctor Zachary, who immediately penned a respectful epistle to Sir Roger Manstock; and also one in like terms to the Lord Viscount Crowbery, which were sent off by express.

Delapoer and his son determined upon staying by the remains of their lamented friend, till orders should be received from Lord Crowbery respecting the funeral; and Henry took an early opportunity of making his friend Captain Carey acquainted with the sad event, that had now occasioned him to decline all thoughts of rejoining the victorious frigate. The return of the post brought him the following answer from that gallant officer:—

“ My dear friend,

“ I loved and respected my relation Lady
“ Crowbery, as much as I despise and abhor
“ the wretch, who not only shortened but em-
“ bittered her days; and I lament her sad fate
“ and

“ and your loss, from the bottom of my heart.
“ Bear up, however, my brave fellow, and
“ when you are weary of the shore, remember
“ you have a mess-mate, who so long as he
“ has a plank to float on, will be proud to
“ approve himself your’s on all occasions,
“ most sincerely and affectionately,

“ ——— CAREY.”

The messenger in the mean time, who was charged with the mournful tidings of his lady’s death, proceeded on his way with all possible expedition; and according to his instructions, first presented himself at the castle of his Lord, and delivered his dispatch. It was received and read in the company of the Reverend Mr. Claypole and Miss Fanny; the former of whom had deputed himself with all possible address, and enjoyed the satisfaction of contemplating the flattering prospect, that every hour brought nearer to his view, from the encreasing attachment of that noble personage to his amiable niece. An uncle, more sensitive to appearances, or less persuaded of the purity of the female character, might have proved a troublesome guest to a nobleman of his Lordship’s irritable feelings at certain moments,

moments, when the vehemence of his passion carried him beyond the bounds, which some people of more rigid notions would have thought a little on the outside of discretion; but Mr. Claypole was not one of these formal disciplinarians, and accommodated himself to times and seasons with admirable facility. With a soul superior to suspicion, he heeded not those innocent dalliances that passed between the lovers, whilst he had the resource of a book, or a walk, and sometimes of a nap in his chair, to fill up an hour when conversation was suspended, and dumb-show took place of dialogue.

Captain Crowbery was upon a visit to a friend in a distant country, so that the society of the castle was very much confined, and their harmony seldom if ever interrupted by the intrusion of unwelcome visitors. Miss Fanny possessed the apartment of the absent lady, and had already made some arrangements in the disposition and furniture of it, which she asserted, and my Lord acknowledged, to be very striking improvements. Two or three old domestics, who had considered themselves as appertaining to the lady of the house, were now very naturally regarded
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as supernumeraries ; and upon a principle of oeconomy, which the Reverend Mr. Claypole took all proper occasions to inculcate, were paid off and dismissed. One or two of these, who had belonged to Lady Crowbery's family from their youth, and were past the age of service, were entertained by Sir Roger Manstock, and charitably enrolled amongst his band of pensioners ; the others sought their livelihood where they could find it. By an arrangement with the parson of Crowbery, the Reverend Mr. Claypole took the duty of that parish upon himself, and transferred to him the service of the church at Manstock ; to which Sir Roger very willingly accorded, from motives, that in candour we must acknowledge to have had some respect to his own ease and convenience, as well as to the aforesaid Mr. Claypole's. No intercourse whatever had in the mean time passed between the allied houses of Crowbery and Manstock ; few souls were less akin than those of their owners and their respective associates.

No charge could be laid against Mother Nature, for having misapplied her workmanship upon the mould in which she had cast the person of Lord Crowbery ; nay, on the
contrary,

contrary, it should seem she had both tempered and modelled it with the most accurate attention, and harmonized it to the soul which it enveloped with the nicest art. No man of common observation could receive a false impression of his Lordship's character from the first glance of his exterior. Nature had not given to him the outward semblance of any one virtue, dignity or endowment, which he did not mentally possess; neither was there one moral failing or defect to be found in the journal of his life, which might not figuratively be said to stand recorded in the title-page of that history: In short, if he had had hypocrisy enough to affect the manners of a gentleman, nobody but a fool would have been capable of being duped by him.

This accomplished Peer, though not quite fitted in all particulars to fill up the vacancy which Henry had left in the soft heart of Miss Fanny, nevertheless was encouraged by that young lady to believe that he was in absolute possession of it. To develop her motives for deceiving him into this opinion might be an unpleasant investigation; but when we have said that ambition and revenge were of the party, it is not necessary to search for others

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to make up the number. This young lady and his Lordship were just then engaged in conversation on a very interesting topic, whilst the Reverend Mr. Claypole had dropt asleep on a sofa that filled up a recess in the room; when the servant arrived from Falmouth with the letter, which announced the death of Lady Crowbery. His Lordship read it with a countenance, that did not indicate any of those weaknesses, which human nature sometimes is betrayed into upon a sudden surprize. He perused it with a steady eye, folded it up again with a firm hand, and putting it into his pocket, in a tone of voice which abated nothing of its usual energy, coolly observed, that the expected event was come to pass—Lady Crowbery was dead.

Miss Fanny started from her seat, with an exclamation very frequently applied by ladies of her fashion, to express either joy, sorrow, surprize or any other passion, that attacks their gentle spirits unawares. At the same instant the reverend sleeper sprung from his couch, ready prepared to second any emotion that his noble friend might be pleased to express, either of joy or sorrow: his noble friend did not as yet discover to which party he was dis-
posed

posed to incline, therefore Mr. Claypole judiciously kept silence, and held his faculties suspended in a neutral state, till circumstances should determine them. "I guess'd how this scheme to Lisbon wou'd end," cried the Peer.—"Yes," replied the Parson, "I suspected it wou'd terminate as it has done, when that booby of an apothecary took upon him the charge of her ladyship's constitution."—"A pretty fellow truly," resumed my Lord, "to be travelling physician to a woman of quality! but I can understand nothing from his letter, but that his patient has slipp'd through his hands; therefore, with your leave, I shall step into my library, and try what information may be gather'd from the messenger."—This said, he rose from his chair, and calmly stalked out of the room.

The uncle and niece were now set free from all restraint, and soon began to let loose their sentiments upon this interesting event, without reserve:—"I judg'd her case to be desperate," cried the uncle; "she was a lost woman when I saw her at Manstock. I cannot say she gave me any great reason to lament her loss: if I ever had any obligations to her, she cancel'd them all by her last haughty treatment

treatment of me, when I modestly made suit for the poor favour of succeeding Parson Ratcliffe." To this the niece made no answer, nor indeed had she paid any attention, as her mind was just then engaged in computing the period of a widower's first mourning; and as this meditation involved her in some dilemma, she abruptly appealed to her uncle, whether it was totally out of form for his Lordship to be married, before he was out of weepers and black gloves: "That is as it may be," replied the uncle, "some people judge in those matters with more liberality and latitude than others; I am no great critic in forms, but this I know, that the sooner you bring his Lordship to the point, my dear Fanny, the better;"—"Why that is done already," cried the Lady elect, "the point is carried, and I have his honour in pledge; else can you suppose I wou'd admit?"—"Certainly not," cried Claypole, interrupting her; "I cannot doubt but you know the ground you are upon, and therefore it is that I have never interpos'd my advice; but now that there is no longer any obstacle, I shou'd recommend you to hold back, till he fulfils his engagements: a seasonable reserve may

quicken desire, too much kindness may chance to quell it."—"I believe," cried the niece, "I am fully capable of conducting myself in this affair, without resorting to an adviser; where there is no passion at the heart, it is not likely there shou'd be any error in the judgment, and I flatter myself you do me justice to believe, I am not in love with the person of Lord Crowbery: he is not a Henry to catch the eye or engage the heart, but he is a Peer of England, has a good estate and a noble castle, which, when I am the mistress of, I confess the triumph it will give me over that provoking chit Isabella, whom I hate and detest at my heart, will not be amongst the least of my enjoyments."

Lord Crowbery, in the meantime, having asked a few trifling questions of the bearer of the letter, dismissed him, and sent for his agent lawyer Ferret, to whom he dictated the following lines, by way of answer to the questions referred to him in Zachary's dispatch:

"Mr. Cawdle,

"Sir,

"I am commanded by the Lord Viscount
 "Crowbery to say, that he has receiv'd your's
 "of

“ of the 19th ultimo, informing him of the
 “ death of your patient on the morning of
 “ that day. With respect to your further en-
 “ quiries, touching the burial ceremonies, his
 “ Lordship bids me tell you he has no answer
 “ to give: the heir or heirs of the deceas’d,
 “ whoever they may be, will act as they see
 “ fit in the case: you have no instructions to
 “ expect from him.

“ I am, Sir,

“ your humble servant,

“ JOHN JEFFERY FERRET.”

CHAPTER X.

The Scene is shifted to Manstock House.

WHEN the messenger arrived at Manstock House, Sir Roger was just returned home from the county town, where he had been unanimously elected representative in parliament. The mournful news caused deep affliction both to him and the sensitive Isabella; the same servant was charged with a verbal message from Lord Crowbery, sig-

nifying that he declined interfering with any wishes Sir Roger might have, respecting the place of burial and the disposal of the remains; he added, that when the will was opened he presumed he should have notice. Sir Roger well understood the spirit of this message, and properly felt both the insult and the meanness it implied. The instant he could compose his thoughts sufficiently for the purpose, he wrote to Zachary Cawdle, requiring him to transmit the body with all proper decorum and attendance, fitting the quality of the deceased, by easy stages to the family vault of her ancestors, at her paternal seat of Hagley Hall, where himself and his daughter purposed to be in waiting to receive it, and to pay the last honours to the corpse of his most dear and lamented niece. The business this involved him in, had probably the effect of occupying so much of his time and thoughts, that grief had the less opportunity of fixing upon him; but the tender Isabella, who had not so full a share of those avocations, surrendered herself to melancholy and desponding meditations. In her breast also there was lodged a secret of most serious import; and in the mean time she had no instructions how
to

to dispose of it ; these she expected to receive by some hand or other, but what to wish she knew not ; whether they should be to impart it to her father, or still to conceal it from him, was an alternative that offered nothing to her reflection, but difficulties and distresses on both sides : that Henry should be left heir to his mother's estate, was naturally to be expected, but how he could be named or described in her will, without a discovery of his birth, was what she could not comprehend : the papers that had been written for her father's inspection after her cousin's death, she knew had been destroyed, and that purpose revoked : she apprehended, therefore, that some order would come to her for divulging it to Sir Roger ; and this was a task which of all earthly undertakings was most dreadful to her : In the meantime the preparations were put forward for the journey, and servants were dispatched beforehand to get the house in order to receive them, and to set on foot all the preliminary ceremonials for a respectable and splendid funeral.

In this interval arrived Mr. G—— with the will, and his coming was most seasonable, for it was on the very eve of Sir Roger's set-

ting out on his journey. This event was immediately communicated to Lord Crowbery, and with the messenger, who carried Sir Roger's note to his Lordship, returned not the principal himself, but his representative Mr. John Jeffery Ferret, attorney at law and agent to the noble Peer aforesaid.

The arrival of this august personage being announced, the Baronet with his fair daughter, and the respectable holder and maker of the will, assembled in the book-room, and were soon honoured with the presence of Mr. Ferret, before whom the seals, after being submitted to his inspection, were solemnly broken open, and the will distinctly and audibly read by Mr. G——. The signatures, seals, dates, and every other particular, were minutely examined by the said Mr. Ferret, who was asked by Mr. G—— if he was satisfied as to what he had seen and heard; to which, after due time for recollection, he gravely replied, “ In point of form I see nothing at present to object to, in point of essence I shall decline giving any answer till I have advised with counsel. This lady died in an obscure and distant corner of the island, the will is also dated not many days previous to
her

her decease, it will be requisite to ascertain, that the testatrix was actually and bonâ fide of sound mind and judgment at the time of her signing the said will; understand me not, I pray you, as insinuating any thing to the contrary, but being a professional man yourself, you will admit the reasonableness of what I say, which is no more than my duty to my principal requires of me;”—“I believe your principal,” replied Mr. G——, “received a letter from the testatrix, written throughout with her own hand, since the date of this will, which if he is not disposed to refer to, Sir Roger Manstock, I am persuaded, has one of as late a date to produce, which will testify to her capacity, together with other proofs, which will be forth-coming whenever you are instructed to call for them: in short, Sir, we shall be ready to meet you in any way you shall think fit to require of us.”

During this conversation Sir Roger sat in silent astonishment to find the purport of the will so contrary to his expectations, inasmuch as the name or description of Henry was nowhere mentioned, nor any bequest whatever specified, that could by any implication refer to him, whilst the agitation it occasioned in

the bosom of Isabella was such, that unable to keep her seat, she rose and demanded of Mr. G—— if she might not be permitted to leave the room, which being answered in the affirmative, she lost no time to avail herself of, and hastened away. “I perceive,” said lawyer Ferret, “that my Lord Crowbery has no further interest in this will, than what respects a few personals appertaining to the deceas’d, left behind her in the castle, of which perhaps a query might be made as to her Ladyship’s right of disposal:”—“That’s a query,” cried M. G——, “we have no concern with; it can only affect yourselves, therefore you’ll manage it in your own way.”—“I perceive also,” resumed Ferret with some surprize, “here is no mention made of a certain young man, whom we in these parts expected to find remembered by her Ladyship at her death, having seen him so much favour’d by her in her life time.” Upon this Sir Roger rose from his seat, and addressing himself to Mr. G—— said, “I humbly conceive, Sir, if this gentleman has no legal observations to state, we are not bound to listen to any others, and may break up the meeting.” Mr. G—— having made sign of as-

sent, the Baronet departed without further ceremony, and lawyer Ferret having put in his claim for a copy of the will, called for his horse and set forward on the spur, to report his proceedings at the place from whence he came.

This business being ended, Mr. G—— joined the Baronet and the heiress, who were expecting him in the adjoining room. Sir Roger began the conversation, by expressing himself very greatly surprized at the purport of his niece's bequest of her entire estate to his daughter: "Nay, I must fairly declare to you," added he, "that I am at a loss how to reconcile myself to the justice of it. The remark which that impertinent attorney made, upon the total silence observed towards a certain young man, who to my knowledge was encourag'd to expect a provision, was a very natural one in itself, though out of place in his mouth; and to say the truth, Sir, I cannot for the life of me comprehend how such an omission cou'd take place, after the promises and assurances I myself have been a witness to. May I ask you to explain this, and how it came to pass that either he forfeited her favour, or that she forgot to make good her

O 5 "promise?"

promise?" To this Mr. G—— replied, that he could only answer that enquiry in part, by assuring him that the young gentleman in question, had in no degree forfeited the favour and good opinion of the lady deceased.—

"Then I am more than ever puzzled to find a cause of her neglect of him," said the Baronet: "Permit me to ask you if he saw my niece before her death:—" He was with her Ladyship, as I believe, to the very hour of her death."—"And was he privy to the will;" demanded Sir Roger? "I doubt," said the worthy respondent, "if I ought in strictness to answer that question, but in confidence I will venture to disclose to you and this lady present, that he was not only perfectly made acquainted with the disposition of Lady Crowbery's property, but also a very active party in the promotion of that measure:" "Then upon my life," exclaimed Sir Roger, "that same mysterious unknown is without exception the most extraordinary and unaccountable young man now living: this is the second time he has put fortune from him, and voluntarily preferred poverty to affluence."—"I protest I do not see any mystery

tery in that," said the other, "I clearly understand there are certain sensations he prefers to others, and certain things in this world which he loves better than his interest."

At this moment Mr. G——, in taking his snuff-box from his pocket, dropped his glove upon the floor without perceiving it, which the lovely Isabella immediately picked up and presented to him with a grace peculiar to herself. An attention so flattering, naturally drew a return of excuses and apologies from Mr. G—— for his inattention in suffering her to condescend to such an office; to which she replied, whilst blushes overspread her cheeks, and gratitude glistened in her eyes;—"Any thing I can do to shew my respect for Mr. G——, will be an office I shall be proud of." This was pointed in so marked a manner, and introduced with a look so expressive, that it would have been impossible for any common observer, much less for that intelligent person himself, not to comprehend the motive of it; and though Sir Roger gave no sign of his having regarded it otherwise than as an ordinary act of politeness, yet we may risque a conjecture, that he argued from it in his own thoughts pretty much in

the same way with the gentleman to whom it was addressed.

This little incident did not, however, altogether turn their discourse from the topic they were upon: Isabella ventured to enquire of Mr. G—— if Henry was recovered from his wound, which question, he conceiving it to allude to the action on board the frigate, drew him into a description of that fight, as he had heard it from Mr. Delapoer. This was in itself an interesting narrative, though not altogether new to the hearers of it, for Cary had written to his uncle since he came into port, and done justice to his brave volunteer; but the warmth of his heart, who had it now in narration, and the affection he had conceived for our amiable hero through the natural sympathy of congenial souls, gave a brighter hue to the description, and animated one at least of his audience in so peculiar a manner, that, at the conclusion of it, she was impelled to venture upon an inference, which in a more collected moment she would hardly have risked, viz. "That where so much courage and benevolence were united, it was no wonder if every action of such a character, produced

produced something uncommonly noble and superior to views of worldly minds."

An apostrophe, so much above the pitch of Isabella's natural diffidence, would hardly have passed without a comment from Sir Roger, had not Mr. G—— been present, or, let us rather say, had it not been justly due to the merits of our hero.

CHAPTER XI.

A Gleam of Hope suddenly reversed.

"WHAT imprudence have I given way to," said Isabella within herself, when she retired to her solitary meditations in her own apartment; "I shall certainly receive the rebuke which I have merited from my father: but Oh! that I might be suffer'd to give vent to my respect and gratitude for that charming man who spoke so warmly of my Henry; yes, yes, he is all that's good and generous, all that is brave and benevolent, all that is engaging, amiable, and excellent in human nature: and now I can interpret his proceeding, I can solve his motives for the sacrifice he has made of his inheritance, to preserve the memory of his mother

ther from disgrace and shame: glorious, unequalled generosity, which throws him on my honour for restitution; and, thank Heaven, that honour glows within my breast as warmly as within his own. Let the consequences be whatever they may, I swear to truth, I will not be a day in possession of the power to do him justice, without seizing the opportunity for performing it: but is that enough? Is there not another hope at his heart? Is there not another wish in mine? May I not believe he loves me? Have I not heard him tenderly express his feelings, his affections, and what answer did I make? Oh! such an one it was as open'd my whole soul, without the feeble, the fallacious aid of words. My sighs were vows, my parting tears were seals of love, more sacred, more sincere, than all the bonds that law or language can devise; and I will keep them faithfully in remembrance; yes, Henry, whilst I have life my heart can never change; I may be wretched, false I will not be."

Here Sir Roger entered the room; his plea was to enquire if she was preparing for her journey on the next morning; but he sat down, and entered into a discourse that certainly

tainly was not calculated to forward those preparations: he began by observing to her how much he had been surpris'd at the reading of his niece's will; and asked her, with a smile, how she felt herself affected by the sudden accession of so great a fortune; "I fancy," said he, "you did not expect, when we propos'd this mournful journey, that you was going to take possession of your own estate; I can assure you, Isabella, it is a very fine place, and, I am told, has been well kept up, tho' our poor friend never visit'd it: I hope however, it will not put you out of conceit with Manstock House."—"So long as you inhabit it," she replied, "no place can rival Manstock in my thoughts."—"But when you marry you may entertain other thoughts."—"I will never marry any man capable of an attempt to detach me from a preference so natural, so unalterable."—"Then you must not marry any man," said Sir Roger, who has a predilection for his own family seat."—"Having already one more than I want," replied Isabella, smiling, "I hope you think there is no occasion for me to add to it."—"I understand you," said the father, in a tone of good-humour, "the man to your mind must have no encumbrances of
house

house or home : he must be without fortune.”
“ I confess,” answering quickly, said Isabella,
“ I cou’d readily wave that, if he had virtue,
courage, generosity, good sense, and discern-
ment to respect and honour you ; without these
qualities I shou’d despise him, had he the
wealth of worlds.”—“ But you know no such
person, not you,” said the Baronet, looking
archly at her as he spoke ; “ you have never
met with any lover of this description, and
whilst you persist in so many unreasonable de-
mands upon his character, probably you ne-
ver will.”—“ Not above once in my life, I
dare say,” answered Isabella.—“ And once is
enough,” said he, “ if you are sure of your
man : look ye, daughter, I love fair dealing
and confession ; I fancy our friend G—— and
you are pretty much of the same opinion in
this case, for I observe you seconded his en-
comiums on a certain person with uncommon
ardour ; now I conceive, when a young lady
is so warm in the praises of a young man, and
both parties are unmarried, it is a strong pre-
sumption that there is a liking in the case ; if
so, why not confess it ? Seeing I have no other
power over your mind, except by correcting
your judgment where I think it errs, or con-
firming

firming your choice where I think it is well plac'd."

"Oh! my dear, dear Sir," replied the grateful damsel, "I shou'd be indeed unworthy of so much goodness, if I did not meet your candour with the sincerest exposition of my heart and its affections. Yes, my ever-honour'd father, I will confess to you, and I trust I need not blush at the confession, that I contemplate Henry's character with admiration and delight: I do believe it is a combination of all human virtues; and I ground my faith, not upon presumptive partial conjecture, but upon proofs which will bear the strictest examination, which cannot be contraverted by malice itself, and to most of which you yourself can witness. Let his conduct be scrutiniz'd from the first moment that fortune threw him upon our mercy to the present instant; where can be found an example of such patience, resignation, fortitude; of such benevolence, bravery, generosity? What has he not endur'd, what has he not forgiven? Who ever made such disinterested sacrifices to a principle of justice and honour, in the most refin'd, the most exalted sense of those virtues? Neither is he less to be admir'd for the purity of his morals than

than for the delicacy of his principles."—
"Well, well," cried the Baronet, "so far, so good; you have gone on briskly with his mental qualities, and I don't know that you have said a word too much; but what is it all, if that one thing shou'd be wanting, without which no young lady ever yielded more than her approbation to the best of men? If the person in which all these virtues center is not agreeable to you, if the form is not elegant, the manners not engaging, the address not captivating, why then, you know, there can be no love in the heart, and praise is all that poor Henry is ever to expect from your lips."
—"Ah! my beloved Sir," cried Isabella, blushing, yet with eyes that shewed it was the blush of joy: "now you are rallying me because I have forborne to speak of what I dare say you suspect was foremost in my thoughts; but in points of truth and fact there can be but one opinion, in matters of taste there may be many: it appears to me that nature has been as partial to Henry in person as in mind; you may not see him with the same eyes."—
"Not exactly, perhaps," he replied, smiling; but yet I can see enough to comprehend why Fanny Claypole fell in love with him, why Susan

san May was distracted for him, and why you, my dear Isabella, do not absolutely dislike him.” — “Dislike him,” echoed the fond damsel; “Oh Heavens! I shou’d be a wretch insensible to the finest work of the Creator, if I cou’d dislike him: surely, Sir, nothing in the human form can be more perfect than Henry.” — “Come, come!” resumed Sir Roger, “you have made up for all deficiencies at last; more need not be attempted, for more, I think, cannot be said; and now, Isabella, having heard your confession, it is my turn to call upon your attention whilst I make mine. In every thing you have said of Henry I perfectly concur; greater proof I cannot give you of my very high opinion of his merit and accomplishments, than by assuring you, that the reasons I have hitherto had for opposing your attachment to him, are, by recent circumstances, in a great degree removed; and as want of fortune alone wou’d in no instance have been my absolute objection, I shall the less insist upon it in the present case, forasmuch as your means are now so great as to make any further augmentation of them by marriage an object not worth attending to. In the place therefore of several impediments, I now see but one remaining.

maining, and that is my ignorance of his birth and condition; I cannot dispense with obscurity or meanness. Now altho' the mystery is not clear'd up by the melancholy event of your cousin's decease, yet the terror of it is remov'd from my mind by the circumstances of her will; for I shall now disclose to you what I shou'd never have mention'd whilst Lady Crowbery was living, that there was something in her deportment towards your friend Henry that gave me great uneasiness and alarm: not that I entertain'd suspicions of the sort which her imperious husband had, or affected to have, of their connection; no, that was not the nature of my terror; the thought was out of reach of probability; the character of the lady gave no countenance to it; on the contrary, there was such an air of maternal tenderness in her regards, that I protest to you, Isabella, I found myself haunted by an idea, that the idle rumour which was spread about the neighbourhood after my niece had elop'd with Mr. Delapoer might have been true, and that this same youth had been the unlawful issue of that connection: under the impression of such an idea, you can't wonder at the vehemence with which I interdicted
your

your correspondence with him; but now that I see him totally overlook'd in her will, I can no longer entertain any suspicion of his standing in so near a relation to her, and with that suspicion of his being her son, I now dismiss my opposition to his pretensions as your admirer."

Had Sir Roger Manstock waited for an answer to this speech, it would have been impossible for Isabella to have disguised the sensations it produced, sensations as opposite to those it was meant to convey as chilling disappointment is to thankful joy! But he was gone as soon as he had uttered the concluding words, and gone in the persuasion that he had made a being happy, who was infinitely dear to him, whilst she was left to reflect upon a situation now rendered far more hopeless and distressing than it had been in the worst of moments, when his opposition was more open and declared. Whilst she pondered upon this, her bosom heaved with sighs, and her eyes streamed with tears. All those fascinating ideas which her fond father's encouraging discourse had raised in her mind were at once dispersed, and succeeded by a press of thoughts that presented nothing but despair and disappointment.

pointment to her imagination. What to do she knew not, and how to shape her conduct in a dilemma so full of difficulties, she was incapable of deciding; for if she availed herself of her father's permission for re-admitting him into the family, what consequence could ensue from such a fruitless indulgence but an aggravation of regret, which every hour of increasing love and approbation would accumulate upon her? On the other hand, what would her father think, after the confession she had made, if she was now to hold back, when she had his leave to advance? What, but that she was the most obstinate and capricious coquette in nature, who was no longer pleased than whilst she was opposed, and had no wishes of her own when they were found to coincide with his? It was now, for the first time, she lamented the confidence that had been reposed in her by her deceased friend and benefactress; for being entrusted with the secret, she could in no case violate her honour by betraying it; and being now made acquainted with her father's motives for proscribing Henry whilst he suspected him to be the son of his niece, no temptation upon earth could overcome her abhorrence of duplicity
or

or deceit, whilst he should retain a sentiment so adverse to that connection; and in this she foresaw no probability of change.

With heavy heart, therefore, we must leave the unhappy Isabella to struggle with these conflicting thoughts, and turn to other scenes, that are prepared to open the succeeding book.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

